DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 456 915 PS 029 758

AUTHOR Vandenbroeck, Michel
TITLE The View of the Yeti: Bringing up Children in the Spirit of Self-Awareness and Kindredship.
INSTITUTION Bernard Van Leer Foundation, The Hague (Netherlands).
ISBN ISBN-90-6195-059-7
PUB DATE 1999-00-00
NOTE 261p.
AVAILABLE FROM Bernard van Leer Foundation, P.O. Box 82334, 2508 EH The Hague, Netherlands. Tel: +31(0)70-351-20-40; Fax: +31(0)70-350-23-73; e-mail: registry@bvleerf.nl; Web site: http://www.bernardvanleer.org.
PUB TYPE Books (010) -- Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC11 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Child Rearing; *Cultural Pluralism; Family School Relationship; Interpersonal Competence; Models; *Multicultural Education; Multilingualism; Parent Child Relationship; Parent Participation; Parents; *Preschool Children; Preschool Education; *Self Concept; Social Cognition; *Social Development; *Toddlers
IDENTIFIERS *Identity Formation

ABSTRACT

Using the mythical creature of the Himalayas, the Yeti, as a symbol for the prejudices and assumptions that people prematurely make about each other, this book discusses bringing up children to accept and cherish diversity and helping them to thrive in an increasingly diverse world. Directed to educators and caregivers of toddlers and preschoolers, the book takes insights from Dutch-, French-, and English-language literature and provides practical examples based on European issues and context. Chapters 1 and 2 deal with facilitating identity development in a fragmented world. Chapters 3 and 4 examine self-image development and the image of the "other." Chapter 5 looks at an educational model based on the social and developmental psychology insights from previous chapters. Chapters 6 and 7 examine parental cooperation and suggest some ways that the educational model can be implemented at educational centers. Chapter 8 analyzes multilingualism. Chapter 9 examines how a group in a child care center or elementary school can be equipped and organized. The book's appendix highlights legal regulations that parents and educators must follow and includes the mission and mandate embodied in the U.N.'s Treaty for the Rights of the Child. (Contains 190 references.) (KB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 456 915

PS

The view of the Yeti

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.
PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
R.N. Cohen
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
1

Michel Vandenbroeck

PS 029758

2

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

About the Bernard van Leer Foundation

The mission of the Bernard van Leer Foundation is to enhance opportunities for children 0-8 years, growing up in circumstances of social and economic disadvantage.

The objective is to develop children's innate potential to the greatest extent possible. We concentrate on children 0-8 years because research-findings have demonstrated that interventions in the early years of childhood are most effective in yielding lasting benefits to children and society.

We accomplish our mission through two interconnected strategies:

- a grant-making programme in 40 countries aimed at developing contextually appropriate approaches to early childhood care and development; and

- the sharing of knowledge and know-how in the domain of early childhood development that primarily draws on the experiences generated by the projects that the Foundation supports, with the aim of informing and influencing policy and practice.

The Bernard van Leer Foundation was established in 1949. Its income is derived from the bequest of Bernard van Leer, a Dutch industrialist and philanthropist, who lived from 1883 to 1958.
Bernard van Leer was the founder of the Royal Packaging Industries Van Leer.

Bernard van Leer Foundation
P.O. Box 82334
2508 EH The Hague
The Netherlands
Tel: +31 (0)70 351 20 40
Fax: +31 (0)70 350 23 73
Email: registry@bvleerf.nl
www.bernardvanleer.org

The view of the Yeti

Bringing up children in the spirit of

self-awareness and kindredship

Michel Vandenbroeck

CIP-DATA KONINKLIJKE BIBLIOTHEEK, DEN HAAG
Vandenbroeck, Michel
The view of the Yeti: Bringing up children in the spirit of self-awareness and kindredship
The Hague: Bernard van Leer Foundation

ISBN 90-6195-059-7

Subject headings:
childrearing, childcare, diversity, early childhood, multiculturalism

Original title:
'De blik van de Yeti: over het opvoeden van jonge kinderen tot zelfbewustzijn en verbondenheid'
© 1999 B.V. Uitgeverij SWP Utrecht

Translation:
Sandra Reijnhart

Cover photograph:
'Latifa's world' by Regine De Loose

Inside photographs
Families in Ghent, Belgium by Hilde Braet

Graphic design:
Valetti, The Hague, The Netherlands

The view of the Yeti

The story of 'Tin Tin in Tibet' begins with a dream. In Tin Tin's unconscious dream state, the name Chang is spoken. The journey is starting. It is a trip to the most valuable of all rarities. The first part of the journey is an approach. Tin Tin arrives in Tibet, and this initial journey ends at the crash site of Chang's airplane. All the sherpas run off and leave Tin Tin, the captain and guide to fend for themselves. The second part of the journey is a true expedition which ends in a convent under an avalanche of snow. The third – and crucial – part of the journey, the final phase, also begins with a dream: the vision of Blessed Lightning. It is almost a mythical journey, a sort of initiation which contains the most valuable lesson. The lesson, shown with snow white clarity, is that the abominable snowman – The Yeti – is good and that he behaves in a way that no 'civilised' man would ever behave: gently and mercifully. Suddenly the story is no longer about Chang, Tin Tin's close friend, who must be saved after the airplane crash in the Himalayas. It is also, and especially, about the Yeti, routed by hunters and wise men, separated from us by species and space, different and – because of his lifestyle – abominable: exotic, rejected, ostracised, alienated but, suddenly a kindred spirit: trusted, almost a brother.

Chang creates the opportunity, the pretext for Tin Tin's trip. He only supplies the goal of the approach.

But what is the ultimate goal of the journey?
The Yeti.

Tin Tin went off to find a man and he finds the Yeti. If he had gone off to find the Yeti, then nobody would have thought to search for the man. Now that we have been lucky enough to have discovered the Yeti, we still have to find the man.

Beware: it is him!

(adapted from Michel Serres, 1994)

The view of the Yeti

Bringing up children in the spirit of

self-awareness and kindredship

Michel Vandenbroeck

Bernard van Leer *Foundation*

8

Contents

9 Acknowledgements

13 Introduction

19 CHAPTER ONE I am me (and you are you)

Multiple identity

Everyone works through their own puzzle

Dangerous identities

Identity is an active and critical process

Today we are all immigrants

Necessary criticism

Necessary reciprocity and inevitable power

41 CHAPTER TWO Writing one's own story

Education in a state of change

Self-image and contentment

The evolution of the self-image

Obstacles for the self-image

The development of the self-image

The first phase

The second phase

The third phase

Preschool age

School age

Adolescence

Adulthood

Conclusion

67 CHAPTER THREE The Other

A strange animal

Psychological explanations

Cognitive development

Emotional explanations: fear and jealousy

Scapegoats and 'black sheep'

Models of social explanation

Social reflection

Social stratification: power

A model of social-cognitive development

The first phase

The second phase

The third phase

93 CHAPTER FOUR The Meeting

Being together is not enough

Equal status

Common goals

Refuting stereotypes

Intimacy

Norms and values to stimulate equality

Re-examining the contact hypothesis

Going meta

Racism by omission

Colour blindness

A long journey

117 CHAPTER FIVE Two sides of the ocean

Intercultural work

The adjustment model

The transitional model

The contact model

The cultural change model

The Anti-Bias Curriculum

A European anti-bias philosophy?

What now?

A tourist approach

143 CHAPTER SIX On to the family
Identity and loyalty
So many people, so many opinions
Change
Changes in family structure
Postponing starting a family
Insecurity in childrearing
A changing labour situation
An increasing economic disparity
Family ideology
Other cultures
Subcultures in child-rearing – child-rearing in subcultures
The implication of the changing family situations on educators
One plus one is three
The dialogue
Ensure quality childcare
Communication
Building bridges and forging ties
Finding and appreciating each other's competencies
Do not generalise
Communication
Know yourself

175 CHAPTER SEVEN Parents about the house
The Matthew effect
The intake policy – the first cut
A policy of mutual adjustment
The first phase – exploring the situation
The second phase – determining differences
The third phase – negotiating
The parent policy – involvement
Fathers

201 CHAPTER EIGHT The Tower of Babel
The mother-tongue feeling
Integration or assimilation?
Secondary bilingualism
Attitudes
Time and quality

221 CHAPTER NINE The small world
Taking a stand on racism
Pretending
Books
Activities
In conclusion

241 APPENDIX
The right to respect
European targets

248 SOURCES

Acknowledgements

A book like this cannot possibly be the product of only one person. It is therefore only fitting to thank those who, through their commitment, have offered inspiration and experience.

I was fortunate to have a group of people who were willing to read through the entire text and offer their criticism and commentary. First of all, I'd like to express my appreciation to Emeritus Professor Remi Baekelmans, chairman of the Training and Resource Centre for Childcare (het Vormingscentrum voor de Beleleiding van het Jonge Kind) (VBJK) in Ghent; my colleagues Ann Somers and Jan Peeters, who came up with various useful ideas; Rob Hintjens, Ömur Öztürk and Veerle Vervaet, as well as Chris de Kimpe and Rajae Sloaoui from the School Advisory Service of the City of Ghent and M'Hamed Chérif, for their help. They also carefully read some of the text, put forth some new questions and formulated some answers. I would also like to express thanks to a number of experts who, each in his or her own field, served as a sounding board to help develop ideas. They include Professor Leni Verhofstadt-Denève (University of Ghent), Professor Ludo Abicht (University of Antwerp), and Rita Swinnen (Bernard van Leer Foundation).

The ideas presented in this book were developed after many years of cooperation between the VBJK and partners in various European countries. I learned from these partners' enormously diverse experience in countless meetings. I also, therefore, owe a debt of gratitude to all the partners of the Milestones towards Quality through Equality (MEQ) project and the Diversity in Early Childhood Education (DECET) network; to the colleagues of the Association Collectifs Enfants, Parents, Professionels (ACEPP – France), the Kent Child Care Network (UK), the Early Years Teachers Anti racist Network (EYTARN – UK); and the organisations Mutant (the Netherlands), Pavee Point (Ireland), and Schedia (Greece).

However, this book is not just about ideas that matured while I sat at my desk or joined in discussions. An essential part of this book relates to practice, and the information presented would not have been possible without the dedication, constant creativity, and experimentation of childcare workers, kindergarten teachers and supervisors. I owe, therefore, a large debt of gratitude to the teams at the following daycare centres: the Bron, Kleintjesoord, the Loods, Nieuwland, the Rakkertjes, 't Sleepken, University of Gent and the Vlieger in Gent, Oogappel in Aalst, Elmer, Joost-e-Fiën and the Free University in Brussels, Merlijn, Knuffel and Elief in Antwerp.

I wrote this book as an employee of the VBJK, and I thank the VBJK for the trust it invested in me and for making the time and means available to pursue this project. I am also grateful for the financial support I received from the Flemish government through the institution Kind en Gezin (Child and Family), and the Bernard van Leer Foundation.

Finally, I would like to mention a few special people whose social commitment is infectious and, thus, have stretched a sort of moral godparenthood over both sides of the Atlantic: Lieve Defrancq in Ghent, Marie-Claude Blanc in Lyon, and Louise Derman-Sparks in California. Last, but certainly not least, my thanks go to Regine, Max and Godelieve De Boeck, who taught me – each in their own way – something about the view of the Yeti.

Michel Vandenbroeck

13

14

Introduction

The Treaty for the Rights of the Child was signed at the United Nations over 10 years ago. Thus far, a good many countries, including Belgium and the Netherlands, have ratified this Treaty. In doing this, they have bestowed a legal status on the right of one's own identity; on respect for the background of every child; and on the teaching of tolerance. However, in practice, education has followed at a snail's pace. There is still a desperate need for insights to help us educate our children in the spirit of this Treaty. We notice this every day in the course of our work at the Vormingscentrum voor de Begeleiding van het Jonge Kind (VBJK – the Resource and Training Centre for Childcare, connected to the University of Ghent, Belgium). The Centre trains childcare workers and sets up innovative projects in childcare.

Newspapers, magazines and television continually remind us how violently people deal with each other. Extremist, nationalistic groups find eager followers for their discourses of intolerance. Recent events in Rwanda and Burundi are still fresh in our memories. Former Yugoslavia is a smoking heap of rubble. The peace process in Israel appears to have stagnated. In Belfast, people still do not dare cross the so called 'peace line'. The list goes on and on.

This book is not only about the specific problems of these places. The world has become smaller, while our own societies have burst apart from a univocal, mono-cultural world to a fragmented society in which various groups confront each other. No child in Flanders or the Netherlands, or anywhere else in Western Europe, can afford not to learn to get along with other people. Whether born and raised in Brussels, Amsterdam, or a tiny Welsh village, no one can uphold that children must be raised for a life in a quiet, univocal society – a country with one language, one people and one culture.

Willingly or unwillingly, we have to prepare our children for 21st century life, which means dealing with each other in a changing society. Although no one today can precisely say what this actually means, one thing is certain: children of today will have to build tomorrow's bridges with 'other' people, and learn to live with them side by side. Their world will be smaller than ours and will change even more quickly. Children who have learned to deal with difference and change will be one step ahead. Those who have a strong self-image will have fewer problems.

There's an old Egyptian saying which seems relevant: 'A beetle saw her children on the wall and said "they look like a necklace of pearls." Every parent and every educator, wants his or her children to grow up to be happy, self-aware people. We all want our children to feel good about themselves, to have the feeling that they are welcome just as they are, with their own individual characters. We want to see contentment shining in their eyes. But how can we do this in our fragmented world, where so many young people have trouble answering the simple and yet difficult question: 'Who am I and where do I belong?' From the many talks I have had with parents, it appears that the themes addressed in this book are a source of deep concern and confusion.

Looking back over the past 50 years, it becomes apparent that we have not done such a wonderful job in addressing a changing world. Of course, an excuse can be found: the world has drastically changed and we have hardly been prepared for this change. Many of us were raised with a simple, static view of the world that did not prepare us to deal with change. But, our 'excuse' is not acceptable for today's educators. The future is made today, by raising the children of today. This, itself, seems more than enough reason to write this book.

Must the children and young people of today still hide a part of their individuality from others? Must they be ashamed, for example, if they have no father? Must they face derision because of their accents? Must they suffer sarcasm because of their clothes? Must they hide their religious beliefs or budding sexual orientation out of fear of being laughed at? In other words, must children, deny a part of themselves and, because of this, grow up bitter? The answer to these questions is, in part, in the hands of today's educators.

We know from a great deal of research that some children, from their earliest days, never feel good about themselves. At a very early age these same children can develop prejudices against people who are, in some way or another, different from them. We know that an injured self-image and prejudices become increasingly more difficult to change as children grow older. And finally, we know that prejudice not only damages others, it limits the children themselves in their later dealings with diversity.

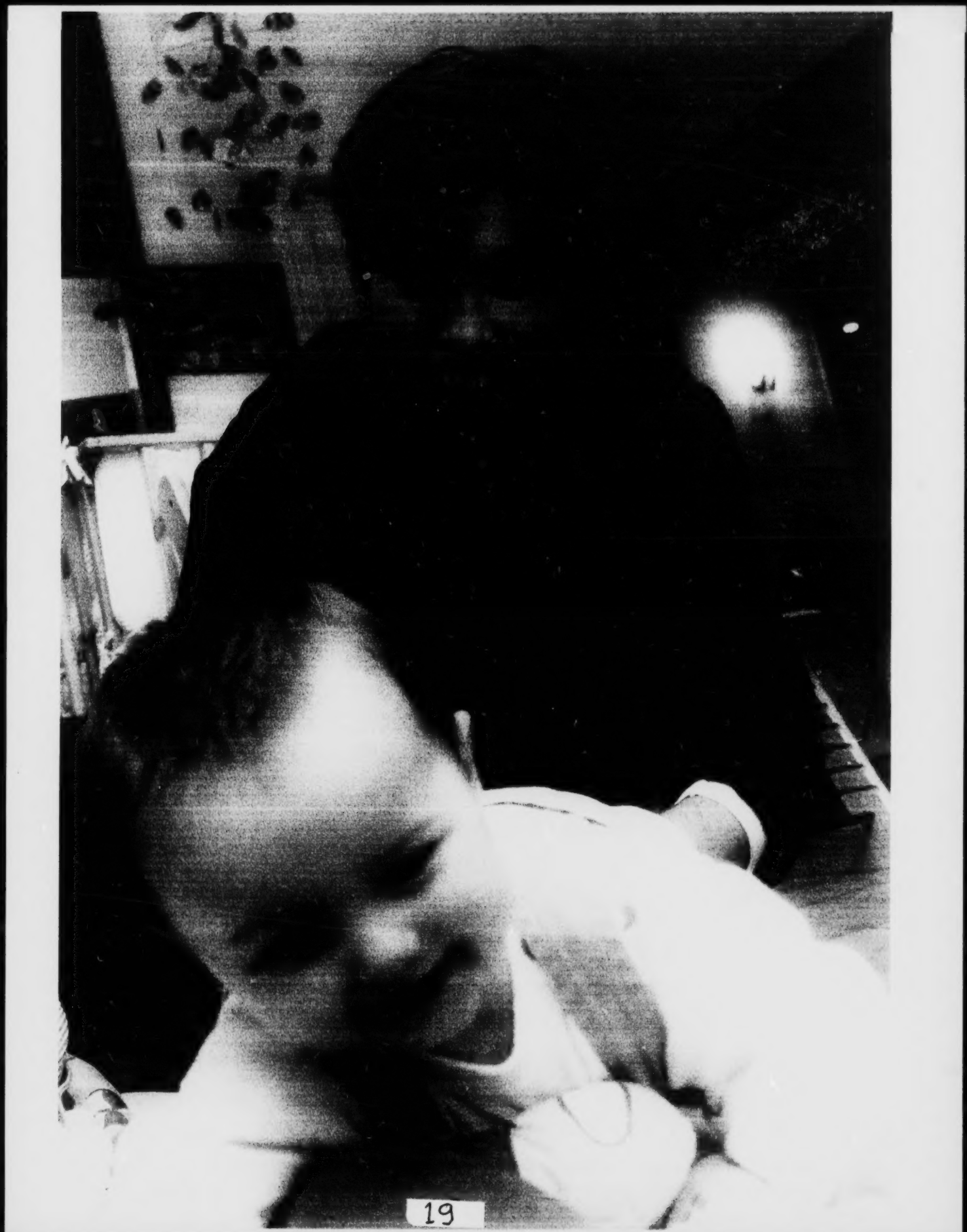
The concept 'diversity' includes language, gender, physical characteristics, social origin, and religious beliefs. As educators can have an important influence on the way children deal with diversity, we at the VBJK work towards raising educators' awareness and supporting them in their task of encouraging the development of a positive self-image in children, and the consequent ability to deal with diversity. A major project on equality and diversity was set up in Flemish daycare centres in the early 1990s: the Milestones through Equality to Quality (MEQ) project set up by VBJK, which joined forces with others to set up the Europe wide Diversity in Early Childhood Education and Training (DECET) network. The daycare centre, the family daycare provider (where children are looked after by a caregiver at his or her own home) and the school are, after all, places where children take their first steps away from the family and into society. They are the passageways from the private to the public domain and the first places that child can experience various situations. They are also the first representations of society that the children will enter, a society that conveys the message to them that they are – or are not – welcome.

For these reasons, I have turned our attention primarily to children in the toddler and preschool age group. It is at this young age that children start to develop a sense of who they are and what their relationship is to others – it is the foundation for whether or not they will feel good about themselves later on in life. It is, moreover, a very important age for developing social skills. This book offers a few insights which can assist educators of these young children. The approach is, therefore, both psychological and pedagogical, and it sees children's education as social and political in the broadest sense. It is my wish that this book generates debate and my hope that psychologists and educators start a dialogue with politicians.

The first two chapters deal with the first and most essential matter in raising young children – facilitating identity development in a fragmented world – and they could be categorised under the heading 'Raising children to be self-aware.' This topic is more fully developed in the next two chapters which examines self-image development and the image of the 'Other'. These could be described as 'Raising children to be able to bond with others.' Chapter Five looks at an educational model based on the social and developmental psychology insights from the previous chapters.

The later chapters deal with meeting the objectives of the educational model outlined in Chapter Five. Chapters Six and Seven look at parental cooperation, and suggests some ways that the educational model can be implemented at educational centres. These two chapters form the basis for a social project that builds on the educational one. Chapter Eight, The Tower of Babel, analyses multilingualism, which is often the source of a great deal of discussion. In the final, practical chapter, The small world, we examine how a group in a childcare centre or elementary school can be equipped and organised, taking into account the principles set forth in this book. And finally, the appendix, which while somewhat unrelated to this book, highlights legal regulations that parents and educators must follow concerning raising children. It includes the mission and mandate embodied in the UN's Treaty for the Rights of the Child.

In conclusion, I have borrowed Lebanese-French author Amin Maalouf's epilogue in his book 'Les idenitités meurtrières' ('Murderous identities' 1998) which explains the wish that the children of my children accidentally find this book in the family library, page through it, and read a bit here and there. I hope they shrug their shoulders, amazed at the fact that in their grandfather's time, things like this still needed to be said.



Chapter one

I am me (and you are you)

'Identity' is a key concept when discussing either education or how to deal with diversity. This is a fact that all authors agree with. Sometimes this concept is preceded by an adjective, such as 'national', 'cultural' or 'ethnic'. 'Identity' is also often mentioned in the Treaty for the Rights of the Child and in the stated goals of the European Childcare Network (see Appendix). It is, however, a controversial concept, that is used both by 'progressives' (meaning, for example, 'we ought to show respect for the cultural identity of immigrants') and by 'conservatives', who use the concept as a new type of racial classification. What comes to mind, for example, is how the following groups define their own cultural identity: nationalistic Serbs; members of the *Bozkurt* (Turkish Grey Wolves – an extreme right wing nationalist movement); or organisations on the far right (such as the National Front in France, or the *Vlaams Blok*, an extreme right wing nationalistic group in Belgium). In their jargon, 'cultural identity' has something to do with tradition and common beliefs that must, under all conditions, be defended against influences of other groups.

Cultural identity replaces, as it were, the older concept of 'race' and serves as the basis for a new form of segregation. One ideology – the purity of one's own identity – has replaced another – the ideology of racial purity. Cultural identity is also a concept that can be used within a political framework (for example, relating to European unification[1]). In this context, the concept of cultural identity is used or misused as an argument for integration as well as for differentiation. Clarity on the differences in the concepts behind 'identity' and 'cultural identity' is necessary to avoid misunderstandings. A significant misunderstanding could arise if we were to characterise 'identity' as something that is clearly delineated, complete and constant over time. Upon further reflection, we realise that this is not only untrue, but a dangerous assumption.

To give one illustration, I am Flemish and I live in Ghent, Belgium. Being Flemish is part of my cultural identity. On the surface, this appears to be accurate. If, however, I look into my identity more thoroughly, it becomes much more complicated. My mother comes from a rural village in Flanders but went to a French language boarding school, as was the custom in those days among the middle class. Meanwhile, my father grew up in a language environment that I can only classify as 'Brussels' – a curious pidgin combining the country's two major language groups (Dutch and French), and the specific Brussels dialect. He went to secondary school at a Dutch Jesuit institute in the city. When I was growing up, the official language was what was then called Standard Educated Dutch, yet I went to a French language kindergarten. While I am indeed Flemish, I am at the same time, different in a few essential ways from what others would consider 'Flemish.' On top of this, there are some aspects considered 'Flemish' with which I do not wish to be associated.

Within this, I am also from Brussels, even though my bilingualism is limited in the eyes of those true bilinguals in the city, and my knowledge of the Brussels dialect is unworthy of a true native. I share with my fellow residents of Brussels the myth that we are a 'separate race' who, with our liberal and social ideas, were at the cradle of upheaval and, therefore, of Belgian independence. At the same time, however, we are also 'schemers' and 'fixers' (people who have the ability to 'arrange' things to their advantage), hypocrites, and people who are not always completely honest and for whom a sense of public responsibility is a bit *elastique* (elastic), when we try to get away with something. As a resident of Brussels, I am in the minority (being a native Flemish speaker as opposed to French-speaking) and, at the same time, in the majority (Belgian as opposed to immigrant). But I can't speak the Brussels dialect well, and today the city is multilingual. Therefore, when I say 'I'm Flemish', this is both true and false

All of this is but a tiny aspect of my identity and perhaps not even the most important part. I have only described my language environment, which is still far from complete. I would have to tell you about my uncle who felt sorry for me because I had parents who were 'so thoughtless' that they sent me to a Dutch school instead of a French one and, as such, 'mortgaged my future'. I would have to tell you how I 'emigrated' from Brussels to Flemish-speaking Ghent and so on. While my language environment is significant, so is the fact that I grew up in

a typically lower middle class environment, though the tradesman's world did not really appeal to me; or the fact that I ended up in an academic environment, and developed my social conscience through discussions at the Café De Kaai. Also important is that I am a man, a father, and so on. Ultimately, describing one's own identity is like writing an entire novel.

By now, the point of this illustration should be clear. If I ask myself what Belgian culture is today – or Flemish culture – I have no clear answer. If I had to say whether or not I was a 'typical' example of these cultures, I would panic. Everyone can decide for themselves which groups and/or cultures they belong to and the precise significance of these. The emphasis here is on the plural – groups, cultures – and includes extras and exceptions. And this is what it's all about: 'cultures' – including but not limited to linguistic group(s), ethnic group(s), gender, social class(es), professional group(s), family group(s). For each of these reference groups, one can see that there are many background connections to other group members, while there may be important differences as well.

For example, the woman who edited the Flemish version of my book belongs to a variety of groups. She is a resident of Ghent and is Turkish Belgian[2]. Her ancestors emigrated from the region of Emirdag, and this group, in some respects, disassociates itself from – and, in other respects, associates itself – Turkish Belgians who came from Istanbul. She is a woman, a mother, and a member of the Islamic community. Being a part of the latter community does not prevent her from criticising some of its symbolic manifestations. Equally, being a member of the Belgian community does not prevent her from criticising some aspects of *la Belgitude*, the Belgian way of being. She speaks Turkish and is fluent in four languages. In short, every time someone tries to label her as belonging to one group or another, they will be a little bit correct, but they will seriously short-change her if one of these backgrounds is not taken into account.

Multiple identity

Pinxten and Verstraete (1998) oppose what they call an 'essentialist' description of communal identity with associated statements such as 'typically Flemish or Dutch', the 'Islamic character' or the 'Western-Christian identity'. For them, it is better to use the term 'the dynamics of identity', processes that are in a continual

state of flux and result in images of identity at one particular moment.[3] This modern-day vision of identity and origin has the support of many scientists from various disciplines. The fact that 'communal identities' are continuously evolving will also become clear in Chapter Six 'On to the family', which deals with norms and values in connection with childrearing.

According to the Dutch educator Frieda Heyting (1999), childrearing in modern society is becoming complex as people are belonging to an increasing number of groups. Because of globalisation, increased mobility and fast information distribution, we come in contact with an abundance of models and, therefore, an abundance of ways in which to define ourselves. The idea has disappeared that there is one authentic 'self' characterised by stable, distinguishable and recognisable characteristics. In response, Heyting now uses the term *multifrenia* in reference to multiple identities.[4]

Many children appear, for example, to be able to deal with various 'identities', each with its own value system and even its own language. That is the conclusion of Ruth Soenen *et al* (1998) in an anthropological study of children of Moroccan origin in Flanders. She determined that these children have an arsenal at their disposal of three different ways of interacting: child interaction, which determines how they interact with parents and family members, and which expresses itself in language and religion; student interaction, which determines how they interact with their teachers (characterised by a calm and quiet attitude); and youth interaction, which they use with their peers and which is characterised by a different vocabulary and different 'codes'. Most of these children appeared to be able to combine these different 'identities' seamlessly, as Soenen describes in the following anecdote:

> ***When I was on my way home from the supermarket last Wednesday, I saw Malika, my young Moroccan neighbour, in the distance. She was wearing a headscarf and still had her blue school uniform on. When we passed each other, she put her hand up in the air and yelled, 'Give me a five!' I gave her 'a five' and asked her where she was going. To Arabic class. She went on her way in her blue school uniform, wearing a headscarf and singing, 'Hey macarena!' (Soenen et al, 1998).***

Compare this with Judith Rich Harris' conclusion in her book 'The nurture assumption' (1998) which received much attention. Her position, in essence, is that children are more influenced by their peer groups than by their parents. One of the most striking examples, she says, is that in all cultures throughout the entire world, children ultimately speak the language and use the accent of their peers and not of their parents. For this book, the question of who has the most influence on children is not relevant. What is significant is the recognition that children are never raised in only one group or only one culture; from a very early age they belong to several groups. For far too long, identity has been assumed to be an exclusive concept: you are either this or that. It is much more intriguing to consider identity as inclusive and to substitute the word 'and' for 'or'.

Everyone works through their own puzzle

One interesting work on this new concept of identity was written by Amin Maalouf, a Lebanese author who has lived and worked in France for many years.[5] When answering the question of whether or not he is half-French and half-Lebanese, he answers:

> ***Absolutely not! Identity does not allow itself to be put into boxes or divided into halves. I don't have multiple identities, I have only one that is made up of all the elements that have formed it according to a special 'dosage' that can never be the same for anyone else (Maalouf, 1998).***

Moreover, Maalouf was quick to add that tolerance does not satisfy him. 'I do not want to be tolerated, I demand that people see me as a full-fledged citizen, convictions and all.' The confusion between tolerance (which implies respect) and indifference will be discussed repeatedly throughout this book.

Maalouf suggests that it is, indeed, of the utmost importance to continue to emphasise the complexity of identity because one is still wrongly inclined to express identity in such sentences as, 'I am Flemish', 'I am Belgian', 'I am black', 'I am a Muslim', or 'I am Serb'. The people who indicate that they belong to several communities are sometimes accused of hiding their roots in an indefinable mush in which all colours disappear. Nevertheless, we all do belong to many communities, and everyone's identity is made up of a whole spectrum of

elements that extends much further than that which is officially registered on our identity cards.

Most of us belong to a religious or a free-thinking tradition; to one or more nationalities; to an ethnic or language group; to a family; to a professional group or a group that has had the same education; to an organisation and to a certain social setting. Even this is only a limited list. People can feel connected to a province, a city or a district; a clan; a group of colleagues or friends; a trade union; a political party; an organisation or a club; a group of people who have the same hobbies, sexual preferences or the same physical handicap, and so on. Our identity is the unique fusion of these and many more elements. It is a cocktail that is different for each individual and is in a continuous state of change. It would, for that matter, be a mistake to confine identity to membership of a number of subcultures.

People integrate the aspects of the group, but they also transform them. The child does not only imitate, but also creates. In the words of the French ethnopsychologist, Jean Biarnès (1999),[6] the human subject builds an identity that refers both to the groups and to unique, personal elements – which are a function of personal history and the course of life. He adds that the difficult – but important – task of childrearing is to continually differentiate between these 'cultural' and 'personal' aspects.

Indeed, Biarnès indicates that alongside these aspects, there are also universal ones. If this were not the case, each individual would only consist of personal and group elements, separate from each other, like unconnected stones in a mosaic. The universal models of the human mind make it possible for us to understand one another.[7] They include: the integrity of the individual (Biarnès, 1999) which Maalouf also addresses; the prohibition of murder, incest and cannibalism; and the desire to raise children to be self-aware and socially conscious. The manner in which the latter is given form and content will differ across individuals and cultures (and/or subcultures). Moreover, the importance attached to self-awareness and social consciousness in relation to each other can vary, even though both are universal concepts. In the same vein, the prohibition on murder and cannibalism does not mean that they can never be transgressed and that they are an absolute. However, every group has exceedingly strict

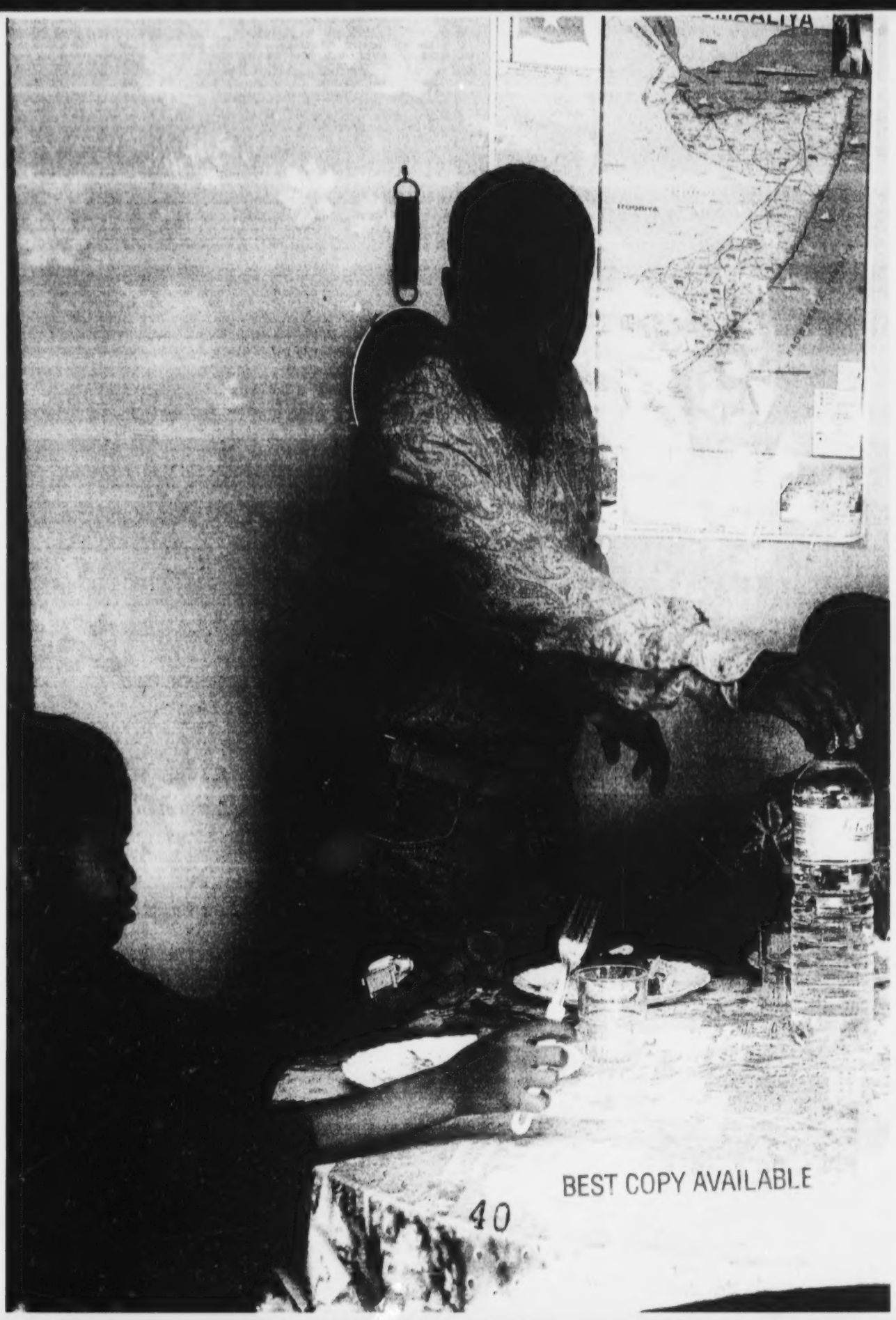
norms concerning situations in which these prohibitions can be violated (for example, war or the death penalty) and on how to deal with illegitimate violations.

There is a hierarchy to these personal, communal and universal aspects which make up identity. We consider one aspect to be more important than another. Thus, for some people the social setting they belong to is much more important than their nationality, while for others exactly the opposite holds true. Over time, the hierarchy may change. For example, Maalouf discusses the situation of a homosexual Italian during the fascist regime in the first half of the twentieth century. The sexual orientation of the man's personal identity was undoubtedly important, but no more than, say, his profession, his political preferences or his religion. But suddenly, he is threatened with State repression because of his sexuality. This man who was perhaps previously a nationalist and a patriot was, from then on, possibly no longer able to enjoy the soldiers' parade through his street. He might even have wished for their defeat in battle. Persecution had given such importance to his sexual orientation that it had displaced his patriotism. Often a person's stated identity is used to set someone apart from so-called adversaries. Irish Catholics, says Maalouf, differentiate themselves from British Protestants by religion, but of course when pitted against the British monarchy, they will call themselves republicans. Even if they are not Gaelic speakers, they will speak their own brand of English. In comparison, a Catholic administrator who speaks Oxford English would almost seem like a traitor (Maalouf, 1998).

Dangerous identities

The concept of identity becomes dangerous when groups place one part of their identity so high in the hierarchy that all other aspects are neglected. This rigidity and association of identity prevents Serbs from finding commonalities with their Croatian or Kosovan acquaintances, or Turkish Belgians from sharing political convictions with their Belgian or Kurdish neighbours. In Flanders, the only TV news items about French-speaking Walloons in southern Belgium are dramatic, often negative, stories that do not cross the language and cultural boundary. This rigid selection can ultimately prevent a self-critical attitude developing among those who belong to the same group. Maalouf calls this '*identités meurtrières*' (murderous identities). Nationalism is only one example of

26



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

40

a union that reduces individuals to their national or linguistic identity. Maalouf (1998) wonders if a typical trait of nationalism is that scapegoats are found for every problem before solutions are found. Our views, he says, often imprison others in the associations of their backgrounds, and our views can free them.

Restricting someone's identity to their ethnicity is just as arbitrary as limiting them to their national or religious identity. This would be to pretend that the communal identities do not exist. What could, after all, be grounds for limiting identity solely to ethnic identity? This question was posed by the French-Dutch sociologist Verbunt (1998). In the beginning, there was only one's ethnic origin and nothing else. In terms of religion, fanaticism posits the individual as being invalid in the presence of God; in nationalism, the individual owes everything to the State. Ethnic, religious or nationalistic cleansing is based on views like these.[8]

No child assimilates only one culture that is simply reproduced as an adult, as was often thought by developmental psychology. Along with their socialisation, children and young people find elements from different sources which encourage them to look critically at certain customs, norms, institutions, symbols, languages, and social relationships. This makes them want to exist in their own right, instead of simply assuming the role that has been outlined by others. Verbunt says that his identity is not determined by belonging to a single setting, but by his individual manner in which he has created unity out of diversity (Verbunt, 1999).

Identity is an active and critical process

Identity, in contrast to 'ethnic identity' is, to a limited extent, something present at birth. A child comes into the world as a boy or a girl, but what this means is not the same in Kabul as in Amsterdam. Once children are adults, the impact that their gender may have on their lives can vary across cultures. How many women today assume the same role as their own mothers? Many fathers today do not want to resemble their own fathers. While a child is born with a certain skin colour, being born a black child in New York is not the same as in Pretoria or Lagos. For a boy born in Nigeria, the determining element in his identity is not that he is black, but whether he is Yoruba or Hausa, while that distinction is less relevant in New York (Maalouf, 1998). In New York, the ethnic origin of a white child is more important: is the child Italian, Irish or other white American?

As an aside, it appears that scientifically, there is no biological foundation for defining the concept of 'race'.

Another example concerns children born with a physical handicap, as this will become an important part of their identities. The way the family and local society deal with the handicap will determine the degree to which the children will also be able to develop other aspects of their personalities. That will, in turn, determine how high the handicap will be ranked in a child's personal 'hierarchy of identities'.

This, too, is a simplification, because individuals themselves also choose which groups they want to belong to and who they will allow to influence them. Moreover, they are not solely a product of their various groups: they themselves influence other groups and create their own personal design out of all these influences.[9] This is why, according to modern researchers, an incomplete picture of a group is formed if the diversity *within* that group is not taken into account. One example is the enormous variation in perception and behaviour pertaining to childrearing and development that occurs not only between ethnic groups, and even families, but also within them. Moreover, human behaviour is not only culturally determined; ecological, socio-economic and psychological variables, as well as genetic factors, play a role (Pels, 1993).

In short, identity is a complicated puzzle of which congenital characteristics and tradition are only a tiny piece. It is, therefore, not surprising that a great number of modern psychologists and educators work with such concepts as 'multiple identity' or synonymous terms[10].

In this connection, Verbunt uses the concepts 'memory' (past) and 'project' (future) [11], which have already appeared in the definition that the Council of Europe gives to cultural identity. In modern society, with its abundance of groups, individuals have the difficult task of constructing their own identities by creating a certain unity among all this diversity. Each group that one belongs to has its own expectations and values that are sometimes difficult to reconcile. Identity is no longer solely a product of the past, it is also a product of the individual's future goals. It is from this synthesis of the past and the future that identity is created and continually rewritten.

Maalouf uses the term 'novel' to indicate that everyone writes and rewrites their own histories themselves, taking into account what we remember of the traditions and the symbols of the groups we belong to, but also taking into account the future we want for ourselves (Maalouf, 1998). Pinxten and Verstraete (1998) also point out that myths and historic memories constitute an important element of communal identity. They are a part of an extensive narrative in which facts and fiction are combined in order to provide coherence. What is actually fact or fiction is not that important, because ethnic identity is, after all, a series of shared mental representations, of *chosen traumas* and *chosen glories* (van Waning, 1999). It is a created 'romanticised' story that can be shared with others. In this context, Heyting (1999) defines identity as the process of self-description in varying social contexts. Bruner (1996), a developmental psychologist, also uses the equivalent term 'narrative construal' for this.

Many researchers and theoreticians have, therefore, come to the same conclusion: identity is not static, but is dynamic, multi-faceted and active. It is never completed and is a personal mixture of past and future, of fact and fiction, creatively rewritten into an ever changing story. The element of the future is essential, and that is why care must be taken not to label someone using a static concept of identity. By pegging someone by their origins, we treat identity and origin as if they are one and the same thing. That focuses the attention on the most static element of a person or a group, on that element that does not change. One then sees the person or the group as what it once was and not as what it is becoming (Laplantine, 1999).

This is strikingly apparent from the testimony of Koushyar Parsi, an Iranian refugee in the Netherlands, recorded by Marlie Hollands (1998). In his testimony, Parsi places the emphasis on both 'roots' and on freeing himself from them in order to have his own 'project'.

> ***I cannot continue to look at my life as a life in exile … Exile is like a whirlpool, you have to really fight against yourself. You stay connected to your roots and this is dangerous. It is truly dangerous to always stay rooted to your past. Then you lose your creativity. You become a pessimist towards the future. The fear of the past becomes the nightmare of the present. … In order to solve the problem for myself, I actually have two countries, a mother country and a father country, and they are both Iran. With the one, my***

> ***mother country, I feel strongly connected and this gives me strength. From the other, I must distance myself, in order to pursue my life here. … If I talk to a fellow countryman, the sound of the Persian words resonates in my head. I enjoy this, it is pleasing, it calms me, even if we had been talking about disturbing events. … If you continue to lament about your exile, about the pain of exile, then you truly lose your identity. Everyone has an identity. You don't need to search for it in the past. It is not connected to a certain country. … Of course, I miss my village in Iran, but … I read, for example, a great deal of Latin American literature. Now, when I dream that I am in my village, I suddenly see crocodiles there. They were in the books that I have been reading. In my dreams, I mix this all up. I even dream about parrots. I have never seen parrots in Iran, but in my dreams, I see them there. That's the way I want it (Hollands, 1998).***

Today we are all immigrants

Living in harmony with each of one's own origins is as essential for personal development as it is for a peaceful society. For those for whom the culture of origin does not coincide with the culture of the country they live in, it is important that they are able to experience this double kinship without inner conflict.[12] It is important that they do not feel obligated to hide their origins and, at the same time, that they can be open to the culture of the country in which they reside. This is no easy task. Maalouf (1999) suggests that in order to really meet the 'other', one must open one's arms with a raised head. If people feel that they are betraying their own people and renouncing themselves, it becomes impossible to take one step towards the 'other'. If, for example, the person I learn the other language from does not respect my own language, the use of that other language is no longer a sign of openness for me. Instead, it becomes a deed of submission.

However, Maalouf also added that although this is the attitude of the immigrant, it is characteristic of modern society that everyone has become, in a certain sense, a newcomer. After all, none of us today lives in the society into which we were born or in which we were nurtured.

I turned 40 a while ago. I was conceived during the Expo World Fair of 1958 in Brussels. It was a Golden Age when people looked to the future full of faith: a

future of affluence for everyone, thanks to the technological revolution; a future with no more war. That society of barely 40 years ago, the society in which my parents created and raised me, hardly resembles the one I live in today. Equally, the society in which our children grow into adulthood will hardly resemble today's society. We must all learn to live with major changes; we must all learn other languages. We feel a vague threat to our identity. Some feel, for example, a fear of being inundated by other cultures, such as the American culture that dominates European television or the English language that dominates the Internet – the means of communication of the future. In this sense, we are all sentenced to a life as immigrants – moving from one society to another – and faced with the choice of what we want to take from which culture, what we take from the past and what we take for the future. 'Sentenced', but at the same time having an incredible freedom: the freedom to change, to make our own decisions concerning our own 'project', to choose where we want to belong and what we want to cherish.

This process of continually constructing one's own multiple identity is not easy. The fact that there are so many identity crises attest to this. Various authors, including Verbunt and Maalouf, describe ways in which identity building can go astray. The causes can be found in both a rift with one's own roots – the past – and in a lack of a future-oriented project. Often, it is the 'holistic' (homogenous) vision of identity as one unit, that crushes people in the construction of their personality. The generally accepted idea that immigrants must renounce their home culture and language in order to be able to integrate into another culture, is an outdated notion based on a holistic image of identity. In fact, even the word 'integration' itself has been superseded by reality as no country has one homogenous culture. The pivotal question is no longer 'who must integrate' but rather 'how do we all adjust to the changes in the world around us.' The holistic view of the world, however, continues to determine our thinking and we then notice that, here and there, people do fall back on the past, on the culture of origin. Or rather, on the personal memories that one has about that past (Verbunt); on the fiction about it (Maalouf); or on its narrative (Pinxten & Verstraete). We will come back to this in the next chapter.

Necessary criticism

Healthy multiple identity development in this multicultural world means that people are able to make choices and to criticise the cultural aspects of the

various groups to which they belong. Am I not allowed to call myself Flemish and, at the same time, distance myself from right-wing Flemish nationalism? Can't I call myself an academic and still criticise the lack of social commitment seen in the ivory tower? Can't I count myself among current 'multiculturalists' and still not like to eat certain foods? Can a man call himself a Muslim and still relate to women in a manner that is consistent with the modern Western body of thought? Can one be a Christian and still criticise the clergy or plead for more democracy within the Church?

This means that the various communities must also allow their members to criticise them and they must take this criticism to heart in order to create an inner-group dynamic. It is easier for groups and cultures that are in the majority to accept criticism than for those who experience the daily intimidation of being the minority to do so, as self-confidence makes criticism easier to accept. Nonetheless, it is essential for everyone to be able to express their criticism. Only then can individuals shape their own identity instead of following the path that someone else has laid out for them. In practice, this doesn't appear to be an easy task.

Very often, criticism of one's own group is seen as a form of 'fouling one's nest.' For example, an article by Benno Barnard in the 29 January 1999 issue of the Flemish journal *Knack* caused a uproar. Barnard is a poet of Dutch origin who has lived in Flanders for many years, so he is an immigrant. At the commencement of the Gezelle Year 1999 honouring the Flemish poet Guido Gezelle, Barnard wrote an article commissioned by the journal that was critical of Gezelle, in which he made some sharp, satirical comments about the poet. This resulted in a storm of angry letters from readers and controversial comments in newspapers and on television. The following are two quotes from different letters sent to *Knack*:

> ***The fact that you use such insulting racist anti-Flemish prose is characteristic of the destructive self-loathing of a certain type of Flemish pseudo-intellectual who likes nothing better than to spit on his own culture and his own history.***
>
> ***Benno Barnard's writings about Guido Gezelle and the Flemish dripping with contempt reminds me of the malicious prose written by Goebbels on the Jews and the Jewish culture.***[13]

When we look at the intensity of these reactions, we see that criticising one of the groups one belongs to often means exclusion. In the years since he applied for Belgian citizenship, Barnard has called himself a Fleming and has been applauded as a Flemish-Dutch writer and poet, especially after he had sung the praises of another Flemish poet, Anton van Wilderode and called him the 'Flemish Virgil'. However, now that he has criticised Gezelle, he is detested as an 'immigrant': 'This could only have come from a Dutchman.'[14] (In fact, that Barnard is Dutch by birth is relevant in order to understand the intensity of the reactions). Suddenly he is no longer seen as Flemish and many members of this group feel personally insulted. This example shows how difficult it is to accept criticism from one's own peer group. The more dominated the group feels by other groups, the more difficult it becomes. We also see the same intensity, for example, when well-known women criticise feminism.

Some children and young people, whose parents or grandparents came from Turkey or North Africa, find it impossible to criticise the environment in which their forbears were raised. But while criticising any aspect of the traditional home culture is difficult for that group to accept, the dominant group in their 'new' country often does not accept criticism from them either. This dilemma can add to the success of this generation's fundamentalist groups of 'clans' or gangs – which are actually separate from both cultures. Constructing one's own identity is, after all, a question of give and take. Group rights must, therefore, be restricted. A group cannot *internally* put limitations on the fundamental rights and freedoms of its own members. Members of minority groups must, just like everyone else, have the right to oppose certain aspects of their cultural heritage, to question it, to change it or to distance themselves from it completely. Freedom is not solely a group right, it is also an individual right (Raes, 1997).

Necessary reciprocity and inevitable power

A key concept that Maalouf (1998) uses in this regard is 'reciprocity'. These days, everyone must adopt a good many elements of cultures that are more powerful than their own, whether they like it or not, such as: the English language, together with a 'uniform' vocabulary in non-English-speaking countries; the euro as a single currency set in motion by the French-German axis; fast food; or television soap operas based on the American model. It is, however, just as essential that everyone is able to save the elements important to them from their

culture, including people, habits, art forms, music, foods, and words. It is also important that these elements are acknowledged on every continent, so that they become a part of the universal patrimony of humanity. One cannot promote the 'right' of tolerance without being prepared to be tolerant (Raes, 1997).

However, in the multicultural world, it is, of course, all about powerful and less powerful cultures. One example of the power relationship between cultures concerns millions of people in the south and east of the Mediterranean who have learned English, French, Spanish or Italian. How many English, French, Spaniards or Italians are there who have found it useful to study Arabic, even though there are 202 million people who speak that language?

Language is, of course, only a symbol, but identity is nothing more than a matter of symbols. As an immigrant from Brussels to Ghent, I remember the warm feeling I got when I discovered a French-language bookstore in the busiest shopping street in Ghent. Wherever one is and whatever group one belongs to, we still need signs we can identify with and with which we can express who we are. That is why we see people of various ethnic origins – in a perfectly prescribed balance – in American television series. For example, if two detectives solve a murder, at least one is black and the murderer is invariably blond with blue eyes. However, it is also astonishing that in all of these 'politically correct' series, there are practically no inter-racial relationships. The sometimes childish way the rule is applied that every citizen – and, therefore, every member of a minority – must have a point of identification on American television, does not detract from the correctness of the principle (Maalouf, 1998). It is a principle, meanwhile, from which much of the European media would still be able to learn.[15]

Jean Biarnès (1999) illustrates this using the fable of the tortoise and the hare, as it is told in various versions in various African cultures. The two animals decide to hold a race to see who can reach the top of the hill near the horizon. The tortoise calls all her brothers and sisters together and has them post themselves along the race course. The hare takes it easy and starts to walk a bit. When the hare looks up, he realises that the tortoise has already reached the first bend in the road. The hare starts to run and passes the tortoise. Then, the hare looks up again and sees the tortoise ahead of him, at the next turning. The hare passes the tortoise again but, once again, sees him at the next bend in the road. When the

hare finally gets to the top of the hill, he finds that the tortoise is already there. Biarnès emphasises that the tortoise wins because she is 'among her own people' (Biarnès, 1999).

The principle of reciprocity demands that there is give and take. There can be no question of the majority – simply because it is the majority – imposing its habits, customs, language, fashion, foods, and so on unilaterally on everyone. Morally, the dictatorship of the majority is no less reprehensible than the dictatorship of the minority, according to Maalouf (1998).

Children who belong to a minority culture come in contact at a very early age with a lack of reciprocity. People in the majority culture make it known, by words or looks, that they are poor, or too small or too big, or too dark or too blond or circumcised or not. All of these differences, whether large or small, help determine personality. These are the first scratches on their community. It is the scratches and wounds which determine, at every stage of life, one's relationship to the groups one belongs to and the hierarchy of one's origins. Anyone who has ever been hurt because of their religion, skin colour, handicap, sexual orientation, accent, clothing or poverty does not easily forget. Moreover, when one aspect of one's origins is offended, then the whole person is offended.

I will never forget how hurt I was as a child by the condescending pity I got from my teachers because my parents were divorced, which was highly unusual at that time and in that environment. People will often primarily define themselves by the characteristics that have hurt them the most. Sometimes, when one does not have the strength to defend oneself, that aspect will lie dormant waiting to explode. But, whether they hide or broadcast their communal identity, they always attach a great deal of importance to it. The origins that are at stake (like skin colour, religion, language, social class, family) can determine the entire identity. Fellow sufferers find solidarity with each other; they unite, mobilise, encourage each other and criticise those 'on the other side.' Standing up for your own identity is, for them, a deed of courage, a liberation. Sooner or later, from the heart of every group that has been hurt, leaders will arise. Maalouf (1998) has painted an alarming picture of the creation of fundamentalist (intolerant) groups and of what he calls murderous identities. That is why, according to Heyting (1999), it is essential during

childrearing to prevent identity forming from becoming prematurely rigidly stereotyped. She sees this as one of the most important challenges of the 21st century.

In summary, we could say that authors from a wide range of disciplines (including sociologists, educators, historians, anthropologists, ethicists) have come to the conclusion that the old concept of identity as a complete and stable entity that we receive from our parents no longer exists. Instead, there is now the complex concept of multiple identities that has to do with personal choice and with an abundance of reference groups. This personal choice takes place in a society in which there are power differences among the various reference groups and in which reciprocity is or is not allowed.

These insights into identity have consequences for our view of childrearing. Verbunt (1998) sees two important challenges here. According to him, it is, first of all, important to teach children to live with diversity. The second requirement is to learn to exist as an individual without becoming individualistic (Somers, 1998b). In the following chapters, we will go into these educational goals in more depth.

First, we will delve a bit deeper into the development of identity, in particular during the first years of life. In this way, we can create a clearer picture of the responsibility of the educator[16] and of the means available to support children in the creation of their personal mix of identities that, when joined together, form a positive self-image.

Notes

1. European cultural identity is often discussed within the framework of European unification. However, since the 1970s, a good many resolutions and recommendations have been adopted with respect to the cultural identity of regions and of minority groups in connection with language, cultural diversity and so on. A good overview is 'L'Europe en bref. Identités culturelles et interculturalité en Europe' ('Europe in brief. Cultural identities and interculturality in Europe'), published by Actes Sud (Rey, 1997). It is interesting to note how the Council of Europe defines the concepts of 'cultural identity' and 'cultural community' in the foreword of the report on cultural rights:

   > *'The term 'cultural identity' groups together many cultural references by which a person or a group defines itself, manifests itself and wants to be recognised. Cultural identity implies the freedoms that are connected to personal dignity and inevitably integrates cultural diversity, the personal and the universal, the memory and the plan. The term 'cultural community' refers to a group of persons who share cultural references which form a common cultural identity that they want to save as well as develop because it is essential for their human dignity within the Human Rights framework ...'*
   > *(from the preliminary version of 4 September 1996 in: Malbert, 1998).*

   It is interesting that, in this terminology, the role of the individual takes centre stage; that both individual and group aspects are considered; dynamic identities are respected (both past and present); and also, how the concept is put into the framework of human rights. The reader will notice that I also attach a great deal of importance to each of these points.

2. Here I use the term *Turkish-Belgian* to mean someone of Turkish origin who has resided in Belgium for a very long time, and was possibly born there. Thus, this term also includes second or third generation Turkish immigrants. It attempts to respect cultural origin without casting doubt on the fact that we are referring to a fellow Belgian citizen, as is indicated by the American term 'African American', which is currently used (see Derman-Sparks, 1998b). The commonly used term 'immigrant' is usually used incorrectly, referring to people who have, in fact, not immigrated. A better term, that expresses a positive social image, would be *New Belgian*.

3. Professor Rik Pinxten is a professor and Chairman of the Department of Comparative Cultural Sciences at the University of Ghent; Gislain Verstraete is a researcher in this department.

4. Professor Frieda Heyting is connected to the Vakgroep Pedagogisch Wetenschappen (Faculty of Pedagogical Sciences) of the University of Amsterdam.

5. Amin Maalouf became known for such books as *Les croisades, vues par les Arabes, Léon l'Africain, Samarcande, Le rocher de Tanios,* and *Les échelles du Levant,* which have been translated into many languages. In 1998, he published *Les identités meurtrières,* on the subject of inclusive identity.

6. Jean Biarnès is Professor of Pedagogy at the University of Paris XIII, and has worked for many years in schools in disadvantaged areas north of Paris.

7. The University of Ghent Professor of Ethics and Philosophy of Law, Koen Raes, also recognises the influence of individualism, known in philosophy by the French term *après devoir,* and communitarism (the influence of cultural and other communities) as well as universal trends (e.g., the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) on the norms and values of the individual (Raes, 1997).

8. Unfortunately, in many places in Central and East Africa, in the Balkans, and in some countries in Asia – 50 years after World War II –, we see once again what it can mean when identity becomes rigid and narrowed down to ethnic identity.

9. This give-and-take view contrasts with the classic concepts of 'socialisation', 'introjection' and 'enculturation'.

10. For example, Italian researcher Elisabetta Nigris (1996b) talks about 'plural identities of the individual' (*identità plurima dell'individuo*) in order to express this complexity. Meanwhile, French anthropologist François Laplantine argues extensively in favour of simply forgetting the concept of identity. He lashes out at what he calls the 'monolithic I' and states that, by pinning every individual down to their origins, we pin them down in the past, instead of giving them the space to become what they are to become (1999). Still others speak of 'hyphenated identities' (Swyngedouw *et al,* 1999).

11. Biarnès uses, in this connection, the terms '*passé-présent*' and '*présent-futur*'. The individual, he says, has to free himself, at each step in his life, from the 'past-present' that he knows and that gives him security about his identity in order to be able to meet the strangeness of 'the other', the 'future present', that will change his identity and, therefore, create unrest (Biarnès, 1999).

12. Is that not true for everyone, that our culture of origin is radically different from the culture in which we live today?

13. *Knack*, 10 February 1999, pp. 118-119.

14. *Knack*, 10 February 1999, pp. 118-119.

15. As is explained in detail in Chapter Nine 'The small world', it is also advantageous for childcare centres to look critically at the principle that people from minority groups must be able to identify with certain situations.

16. Whenever the term 'educator' is used here, it means the childcare staff, the family daycare provider and the kindergarten teacher. This term does not differentiate as to gender. Therefore, when we use the term 'educator', the reader is asked not to differentiate either, unless the gender is specifically stated.

Chapter two

Writing one's own story

In the previous chapter, we saw that identity is not something that is created step by step or which remains stagnant, and we discussed multiple identities and the importance of one's various communities. One way of describing the development of self-image is to use the symbol of the writer. Creating one's own identity – the self-image – is to write and rewrite one's own history and future. Maalouf talks about 'the novel' and Pinxten and Verstraete talk about 'the narrative', while Heyting uses the term 'self-description.' We know that the first years of life are extremely important for the development of identity and self-image, and the degree to which people are satisfied with who they are. Heyting (1999) calls this 'Educating to the art of the narrative mastery'. As a result, it is beneficial to help children gradually write and rewrite their own stories.

In the children's story, quoted in Bruner (1996), when Peter Pan asks Wendy to go back to Never-Never Land with him, he reasons that she could teach the Lost Children how to tell stories. 'If they know how to tell them, the Lost Boys might be able to grow up,' he says. This example was given in the work of Jerome Bruner[17]. In his wonderfully documented vision on how today's education must prepare children for the 21st century, he also compares the development of the concept of 'self' with the construction and telling of one's own story. The narrative, he adds, is just as important for the cohesion of a culture as for the structuring of the individual. In present-day society, with all its changes and immigrants, creating a coherent self-descriptive story has certainly not become any easier (Bruner, 1996).

Education in a state of change

Children are confronted with a multitude of models of values, customs and habits at a very early age: one model can no longer be imposed. Obedience,

including adopting and internalising a single model of the educator, used to be the primary virtue. In our society and in the 21st century, the primary virtue is no longer the docile 'enculturation', it is adaptability: being able to adapt to diversity and change. It is, of course, still about teaching children to live within a community's rules. These rules are, however, always those of a specific community and they are seldom universal. We don't live in one community with one set of rules, but in a wealth of communities with a wealth of value systems, customs and habits. In each of these communities, the individual negotiates a balance between the rights of the individual – the community's obligations – and the rights of the community – which are the individual's obligations (Verbunt, 1999). These days, increasingly younger children join a group, or several groups, of peers. The peers have an enormous influence over the children, and the children clearly form their own 'culture'.

When my son was nearly two years old, I moved to Ghent from Brussels. Barely six months later, I noticed that he had exchanged the sharp vowels typical of the Brussels accent for the softer Ghent variety. He is now eight years old, and, although my accent is described by Ghent residents as a 'Brussels' accent, they cannot hear this accent in my son's speech. Linguistically speaking, my son and I belong to two different cultures. Nonetheless, he says, 'I live in Ghent but I come from Brussels' – though I'm not sure if he really thinks this or simply says it to please me.

In order to take one's place in a versatile society, the individual needs to create a positive self-image and a unique, personal description. My self-description novel will consist of many facets, each with its own model and its own criticisms of that model. In my novel, for example, I am a man and a father. And while my own father plays an important role in this self-description, it does not mean that I uncritically accept his model of fatherhood. But, nonetheless, I notice – sometimes to my own surprise – how much I resemble him. The language, norms and values that I employ as a father do not precisely match those of my self-image as a man, nor even how I think that a man should behave. These norms and values are different again from how I feel that I should – and do – behave professionally.

Sometimes some aspects of norms and values conflict with each other and with our behaviour. An example of this is that I was raised in a setting where courtesy

42

and propriety were important in contact between the sexes – the somewhat archaic 'gallantry' when a man opens a car door for a woman or walks up the stairs first. Based on this tradition, I can appreciate it when a woman asks me to open the wine or to carve the meat. In my professional environment, where we work for equal rights, this behaviour would be difficult to accept by many 'like-minded' colleagues. Everyone can think of examples of differences in norms and values in the various groups to which they belong. Does this make us all schizophrenic?

Healthy identity development consists precisely of the development of a certain 'multifrenia' (described in the previous chapter). It is all about creating a *leitmotiv* – a composition – in the image we have of ourselves. In today's complex society, this is no easy task, and is the reason why educators should support children in this. Educators can do this because they themselves constitute the first new setting that a child experiences outside of the home. Early childcare is often a place where children are confronted with diversity for the first time.

Self-image and contentment

One of the most important pioneers in describing the origin of identity is Erik Erikson (1971)[18]. He was one of the first to point out how confusion (*identity confusion*) can result when, for example, there is a conflict between the image that we have of our bodies and our personalities (*concept of self*), and the image that we would like to have of ourselves (*ideal self*). There can also be confusion between our concept of self and the image that we suspect that others have of us (*social self*) (Verhofstadt *et al*, 1995).

This is clarified dramatically in the classic film *East of Eden*.[19] The main character, a young man called Cal Trask, does everything he can to please his father, who always treats Cal affectionately but negatively and continually compares him to his 'better' son, Aaron. Cal becomes completely confused between the image that he has created of himself (created, in part, by his father); the image that he would like to have of himself; and the image that he thinks that others have of him. This conflict comes to a head in a dramatic scene at his father's birthday party when he gives his father a sizeable amount of money. His father refuses it and his brother says to him, 'You're bad, you've always been bad.' His confusion is finally complete when it appears that his mother, who runs a

brothel, and is therefore seen in a negative light by the community, is the only one to see any good in him at all. In the emotional end of the film, Cal's father, on his deathbed, finally asks Cal to do something for him. By asking him a favour, he bestows trust in Cal, who can then reconcile his self-image with his social self, as Erikson would put it.

Erikson was one of the first to point to the importance of self-image in one's further development. This concept is very closely connected to what we call 'feeling good about oneself', and comes closest to 'contentment'.[20] Erikson states that the most important characteristic of the identity experience is the feeling of being at home in one's own body, a feeling of 'being known' (Erikson, 1971). This shows the extent to which self-image is entwined with what we simply call 'being happy', and how crucial it is in raising young children. For Jerome Bruner, one of today's most well-known developmental psychologists, self-esteem consists of a combination of what we believe we can do and what we fear we cannot do. He regards working on self-esteem to be the primary task of the educator (Bruner, 1996). All the different definitions and views show us that self-image determines people's ability to function well later in life, and educators have an important role to play here.

The evolution of the self-image

Erikson (1971) emphasises that identity development is the gradual construction of inner unity, of self-integration, of an understanding of continuity, and of the pursuit of unity (Verhofstadt *et al*, 1995). Researchers such as Verbunt and Heyting point out that it is the educators' task to not allow identity to fall into rigid stereotypes. In other words, they must help children to create a varied and flexible image of themselves, in which membership in multiple communities does not lead to conflict.

One example seems especially relevant. A three year old boy of Turkish origin continually received the message from his father that it was very important to speak Dutch, even at home, so that he could integrate into the society he lived in and where he would later earn his living. Meanwhile, from his mother, he continually heard how important it was to speak Turkish so that he would not lose his connection with his family origins and would be able to retain the possibility of returning to Turkey. The boy experienced this as a conflict:

speaking Turkish was equivalent to disappointing his father, while speaking Dutch was a betrayal of his mother. Ultimately, the boy did the only thing he could: he did not talk at all, until concerned educators sent him for counselling.

Even if the conflicts are not always so severe, we can easily imagine that writing one's own novel is not easy when one has a large diversity of readers. Development psychologist Rita Kohnstamm (1991) says that self-image develops through the image of oneself that one gets from others. For children, these are not only their parents, but also other adults and children.

To illustrate this, when my son was six years old and had become a real resident of Ghent, we moved to 'the other side of the tracks'. It was springtime, and during the months of May and June I saw how he spent hours looking out of the window at the children playing on the street. Although I encouraged him to go outside to play with them, he refused and appeared to remain passive. Then suddenly, towards the end of June, he stepped outside and went to sit on the kerb next to the playing children. The way he walked, the way he sat, and the way he talked were new to me. During the two months, he was actually very actively observing the children and had familiarised himself with their street culture.

From that day on, he belonged to a new group, with its own norms and ways of relating to each other. He had understood this perfectly, and had incorporated it into his personality. Meanwhile, his behaviour at school did not change noticeably. Curiously enough, he seemed perfectly capable of bouncing back and forth from one group to the other without being troubled by contradictory norms. I recognised the feeling of both pride and sorrow because I saw what was happening: my son was finding his own path. As Harris describes, many immigrant parents will experience this ambivalence to a much greater degree (Harris, 1998). Ultimately, the parents' ambivalent feelings might also determine their view of their child and, therefore, the view that the child has of himself.

Obstacles in the development of the self-image

Ultimately, individuals construct their own self-image and are, therefore, not only the product of how others see them. Life in a multitude of communities does not make it any easier. A number of researchers and authors have pointed out that identity development today can run into various problems.

One danger is that the self-image becomes rigid and narrowed down to one single reference group. In order to avoid confusion, the individual conforms to one group whose norms, values, and behaviour he accepts without question. The narrowness gives a feeling of safety, of security. It is this feeling of false security that nationalism and religious fanaticism offer, or that adolescents look for in surrogate families such as street gangs. Research shows that popular nationalism appeals particularly to people who do not feel connected to other groups. A feeling of rootlessness also strengthens negative attitudes towards minority groups, according to researchers Jaak Billiet and Hans de Witte (1995).[21] Heyting (1999) calls it 'tribalisation' and Maalouf (1998) calls it 'murderous identities.' Of course, the more children and/or young people experience that the communities in which they live are extremely negative towards other communities, the higher the risk of such development.

Based on his experience with adolescents, Gilles Verbunt (1999) describes some possible problems in a child's identity development. One of these, taken from Robert Louis Stevenson's 1886 book 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde', concerns inner conflict and two personalities. In order to avoid contradictions among the various communities and groups, individuals can more or less consciously divide themselves up into different personalities to suit particular groups. This is not the code switching that Harris (1998) describes and that Soenen (1998) gives in the example of the Moroccan girl in the blue school uniform and head scarf who sings *Macarena*. These latter cases show a dealing with an integrated, personal mix of influences, while, in the Jekyll and Hyde example, there is no continuity, and the individual feels that he or she is no longer 'whole' and that the differences between the various groups can only be solved by separating them completely from each other. The lesson here is that children must learn to exist as original, unique personalities, and must not be ashamed of their diverse cultural origins.

Another problem which Verbunt (1999) describes is 'zombie existence', which occurs when the groups, communities and settings in which people feel comfortable do not have a constructive influence on them. Instead of creating their own personal mix from various communities, individuals move primarily in communities that do not influence them, such as groups or movements which create unstable connections and which are geared towards consumerism.

Verbunt uses the example of 'the large family of television viewers' or young people who bond at a rave party or over a football club (Verbunt, 1999). Heytink points to this type of shadow existence when she talks about Multi User Domains – communities on the Internet that have become the everyday reality of countless Internet users (Heytink, 1999). When one logs on, a user can create a special identity specifically for the group, which might have no connection whatsoever with the rest of the user's life. A new name, a different gender, a new personality and other characteristics can be manufactured for this situation. In Internet communities, one can easily make sure that the 'social self', the 'ideal self', and the 'concept of self' are very close together. While as a game this isn't problematic, a problem may arise when the social world (or the groups of reference) only consists of groups that can exert no influence on the individual, and vice versa.

Finally, one specific danger that applies, in particular, to children who look conspicuously 'different' is 'self-hatred'. Various therapists report that they meet children who seriously harm themselves because they are dissatisfied or ashamed of such things as their skin colour, their hair, the shapes of their noses, eyes or mouths, their language, their physical handicap. British therapist Jocelyne Emama Maxime reports children wounding themselves in order to make their black skin white or to remove it altogether. Any educator who has ethnic minorities in the institution can also provide examples of how even very young children express a negative self-image with regard to their appearance.

One of many examples that comes to mind is of children who, when playing 'make believe', refuse to take certain roles because they 'are only for white children' (see for example, Brown, 1998, Derman-Sparks, 1998c, Vandenbroeck, 1998a). These generally small, simple incidents give us an insight into how the self-image of toddlers and preschool children is influenced by negative remarks from the outside world. When educator Abiola Ogunsola made Mother's Day cards with children and asked them, 'Who thinks his or her mother is beautiful?' one child did not react. When she asked 'Why don't you say anything, your mama is beautiful, too, isn't she?' the child answered, 'No, she is black' (Ogunsola, 1990).

The self-image of children can be harmed if we do not treat children with respect. A Turkish Dutch mother told me recently that her three year old

daughter came home from school with the question, 'Mama, we aren't Turkish, are we?' 'Why not?', her mother asked. 'Because Turks are dirty,' was the answer. A mother of Moroccan origin also recently told me a similar story. When she picked up her six year old daughter at school, the child whispered in her ear, 'Mama, please don't speak Arabic to me when the other kids can hear.'

The issue of creating a multiple identity from a wealth of cultural influences will affect everyone in the future, whatever one's own cultural background may be. Some groups will experience this more strongly than others. In particular, 'immigrants' are often seen as belonging to a great diversity of groups. [22] In their literature review, Swyngedouw *et al* (1999) describe four ways in which immigrants deal with their new culture via four forms of 'acculturation'.

The first, 'integration', is the most common. Newcomers strive to establish contact with the culture of the host country and, at the same time, attempt to maintain their own culture. Immigrants who choose integration want to keep their own culture and pass it on to their children. At the same time, they take their place in society and are open to new cultural ways of life in the host country.[23]

'Assimilation' is a second possibility. This means that immigrants reject the cultural ties with the country of origin and completely focus on the dominant culture in the host country. In the hope of being accepted, they can react against their group of origin and be inclined to 'overcompensate' by, for example, explicitly choosing certain clothes, music, and food.

'Separation' is the opposite of assimilation. Immigrants who choose this focus on the minority culture and oppose the dominant culture. That is, for example, the case when young people choose to belong to nationalistic or fundamentalist groups which oppose integration or 'modernity'.

Lastly, 'marginalisation' is the least common form of acculturation. In this case, the minority and majority culture are both rejected. These people do not feel at home anywhere (Berry in Swyngedouw *et al*, 1999).

When these four types are listed like this, it appears as if it is purely the personal choice of the immigrant in question. This is, of course, not completely true, as

acculturation is also influenced by how the groups of reference feel about it and by the attitude towards minority groups that has been adopted by the dominant culture. (We are reminded, for example, of Maalouf's concept of 'reciprocity' (1998)). Research shows that just because immigrants are strongly focused on contact with the dominant culture, they do not as a matter of course attach less importance to maintaining their own culture.

From all of these descriptions of problems that appear during the development of identity (tribalisation, Jekyll & Hyde, zombies, self-hatred, separation and marginalisation), it becomes clear how important it is to pay sufficient attention to the development of identity. In the field of early childhood development, the growing awareness of children about themselves, their environment and place within that environment, has from the beginning, been one of the primary goals of nearly all experts who have reflected on the well-being of young children. As early as the book on Lóczy pedagogy for young children, self-identity was already listed as one of the four mainstays (David & Appell, 1973).

It is essential that very young children come into contact with diversity, to learn about variety and different outlooks, ways of living, appearances, customs, smells, tastes, languages, and so on, so that they become comfortable with a multiform world. Children must experience this variety very early on so that, at a later stage, they can deal with it. They must also experience the fact that the various educational environments in which they come into contact are loyal to each other so that they will gradually be able to develop their own coherent vision of themselves. This is an important educational principle for all children and not only for children who belong to one of the minority groups. Childcare centres, family daycare providers and kindergartens have a special mission here. These are, after all, the places where various cultural backgrounds come together (at least two: the home culture and the institutional culture[24]). The manner in which one does or does not succeed in building bridges between these different worlds gives children their first glimpse on how modern society deals with its own diversity.

The development of the self-image

Let us take a closer look at the development of self-image and at the place the child occupies with respect to others, so that we can obtain a clearer framework

in which to consider the role of the educator. This process is based on the classical development framework presented by Erikson, among others, and on recent findings by Derman-Sparks *et al* on dealing with diversity. The hierarchy *between* each phase is a key point, according to developmental psychologists. Each phase continually builds on and is influenced by the previous one, and the way one passes through a phase will partially determine the outcome of the following phase. Thus, the educational situation at a young age influences development at a later age. Post-modern authors (Dahlberg *et al*, 2000; Burman, 1994) criticise this developmental approach. They state that the models of developmental psychology are based on research carried out on limited groups of children – in short, only middle-class children in the Western minority world were studied – from which universal conclusions are drawn. Chapter Six goes further into this criticism. The post-modern authors go on to say that this linear approach, using the metaphor of the ladder with stages to cross, underestimates the value of childhood by describing it as a stage to pass onto adulthood. This creates the image of a poor child as opposed to the rich, competent child. Although this criticism is fundamentally true, we will still look at the developmental discourse, partly because it belongs to a general frame of reference of many educators, but also because it can highlight some of the areas that adults are responsible for in helping children towards self-esteem and connectedness.

The first phase

In the first year of life (called the 'oral stage' by Freud), the most important relationships remain limited to a few childrearers, namely the mother, the father and possibly an educator. In this first period, the child bonds with a 'primary caretaker'. This is usually the mother, but can certainly be another significant individual. Because there is constant and sympathetic care, the primary caretaker's behaviour becomes predictable to the child who, in turn, feels or shows trust and security. The literature concerning this attachment and care calls it 'sensitive responsiveness'; and defines it as the measure in which the caretaker acknowledges signals from the child, interprets them and reacts appropriately (van IJzendoorn *et al*, 1982). Erikson (1971) characterises this stage as consisting of 'trust versus distrust'. Through small crises (short separations, the attention of the mother being given elsewhere, the transition from breast feeding to bottle feeding) children experience the trust being regained time and again, and they discover their own independence. In this way,

50

the first stages of self-confidence are developed step by step. Children gradually experience their power to influence the relationship with the caretaker, and to induce behaviour (if I smile, she smiles back; if I crow, she laughs; if I cry, she takes care of me). Children also hear how their experiences are put into words and therefore become more aware of themselves. Babies will purposely use the sounds and signals that induce reactions and will ultimately realise, 'I am worth taking care of'.

The fundamental trust in the primary caretaker (or caretakers) and the foundation of self-confidence are two sides of the same coin. Based on her years of experience as a child psychoanalyst, Françoise Dolto[25] has described how important this first stage is, and how the child's self-image and the primary caretaker are connected. Because the primary caretakers talk to the child, verbalise what the child feels and what they themselves feel and do, the child becomes self-conscious (Liaudet, 1998; Nasio & Dolto, 1997).

One important aspect of mental development in young children is the 'permanence of persons'. This means that children (from the age of six months) are gradually able to hold onto a mental image of the primary caretakers, even when these individuals are not present at that moment. As they grow older, they can hold onto this image for increasing periods of time. This means, for example, that toddlers can remember what their mothers look like while they are at the crèche. As this mental picture comes into being and increases in strength, toddlers can gradually find comfort in a 'transitional object', like a 'security blanket', that suggests the image of the primary caretakers and offers comfort when they are not around. Gradually, language begins to take on that symbolic role, so that the words, sounds and melody of the language evoke a mental picture and provide comfort.

During this first period, an extremely important crisis occurs when the child first leaves the trusted home environment and goes to daycare. The trusted voices, gestures, smells, routines and reactions are suddenly withdrawn to make room for another environment, other habits and other adults. This crisis does not necessarily have a detrimental effect on development. There are a great many indications that children become stronger and benefit from wider childrearing settings. At the very least, research has shown that the initial

physical separation of mother and child does not damage the quality of the attachment between the two, assuming, of course, that the daycare is of high quality[26] and carefully prepares and supports this transition, in cooperation with the primary caretaker. Only if mutual trust between the family and the educational institution is established can they develop trust in the centre. If the centre's culture, language, habits of feeding, sleeping, comforting, 'parenting', and so on, display no similarities to those of the home, there can be a breach in that trust. Children will then experience an unknown world in which they are abandoned and in which there is no connection with their home world. This is why it is enormously important that there is communication and harmony between the two settings before children start childcare. (Later in this book we will return to this important theme, addressing childcare in practice in Chapter Seven.) Unresolved conflicts in this phase can, according to Erikson (1971), lead to disturbances in the development of affective relationships at a later age (Verhofstadt *et al*, 1995).

The second phase

The second year of life is the beginning of a second phase that Freud calls the 'anal stage'. It is a period of holding on and letting go; a period in which children – because of the security and trust that has developed – can distance themselves, little by little, from their primary caretakers and start exploring. In our culture in Belgium, this is a critical period. Children have gained more independence; they are mobile (first crawling, then walking); they learn to control their anal functions; learn to say 'no'; and learn to identify themselves and, as such, to establish a place. They gain a feeling of power over their surroundings, but they are also frightened of this power, and ultimately feel their powerlessness in conflicts with parents and educators – powerlessness over their own boundaries and limits. It is, indeed, a period of prohibitions, violations (in thought and deed) and testing boundaries. According to Erikson (1971), this period is characterised by the contrast between 'autonomy' (independence) 'versus doubt and shame'. And because of the trust built up in the first phase, the scales can tip towards autonomy.

The complete body of psychoanalytical literature emphasises how important this period is for the development of the conscience. In this vein, Françoise Dolto (quoted in Liaudet) caricatures this phase:

52

> ***The child who, before the age of three, received his mother's conviction that she is always pleased with him, independent of what he takes (eats) or does (defecates), will not be depressed or fearful, like those children who have only known conditional love. He will be an independent child, who can manage and control himself. It is often a lack of self-confidence in this phase that can lead to aggression towards others at a later stage (Liaudet, 1998).***

During this period it is obvious that understanding the self undergos an enormous development. Children identify themselves, give themselves the name that they have received from their parents and, therefore, differentiate themselves from others. They also begin to notice external differences. The clearest ones, such as having a penis or vagina and differences in skin colour, are noticed first. Derman-Sparks and others have noted that children as young as 18 months can often classify their own photographs with those of people of the same 'race'. The realisation that one belongs to a certain group will be gradually linked to the realisation that one does *not* belong to a certain other group. Thus, children learn to give themselves a place among others (Derman-Sparks & the ABC Task Force, 1989; Aboud, 1988).

The mirror plays an important role in understanding the self, in the realisation of who the child is. Children discover their own mirror image and, only then, discover who they are. Before this time, their self-image was purely imaginary – hypothetical. The mirror allows children to realise that they are small. The mirror can be taken literally, but also figuratively: the gaze of the other is also a mirror. It is only after discovering themselves in the (literal or figurative) mirror that children name themselves in the first person and no longer say, 'Max is hungry', but now, 'I am hungry' (Dolto, 1984). When children look at their mirror image, they see what they are. The gaze of another person can be a supportive look that gives children self-confidence; but it can also be a restrictive look that confines children. In this way, the first realisation that one belongs to a specific group can also lead to dissatisfaction or, through the look of another, be a source of pain.

During this phase it is essential that the curiosity of children in exploring their environment, and their position within that environment, be stimulated and not inhibited. In their first discoveries of the diversity around them, children often

express their astonishment and curiosity in ways that embarrass adults. I am reminded of the boy who looks between the legs of a girl in search of the penis, or of the girl in the busy tram who loudly points out the large birthmark on that lady's face. Adults are often extremely annoyed by remarks like these. We are inclined to ignore them or to react in a way that brushes the remark aside, 'No, no, we're all just people', or, 'Shhh, you can't say that!' In this way, we gradually teach children to ignore differences – to pretend we don't notice – because it is more polite. Our own discomfort makes it difficult for us to teach children to deal positively with differences in appearance. This is one of the reasons that in the final chapter of this book a great deal of attention is given to the elements that make diversity visible and, as their language gradually develops, discussible with children.

The third phase

Towards the end of the toddler phase, we slowly move into the third phase, which Freud calls the 'phallic stage'. Now that children have discovered that they are people, they will gradually discover what kind of person they can become. They will shape themselves through their enormous urge to express themselves by building things, by fantasy games, by their developing use of language. Children are increasingly able to recognise themselves as belonging to particular groups. In experiments with skin paint, for example, they display a great interest in placing themselves within the gradation from pale pink to deep brown. During this period children also experiment with what it means to belong to a specific group. After the discovery of: 'I am a boy' or 'I am a girl', the question arises of what it means to be a boy or a girl. They interpret this by observing their surroundings, by generalisations and by using their imaginations. This is strikingly illustrated in a scene described by Ausdale & Feagin (Derman-Sparks, 1998c):

> ***Corinne is four years old and has one black parent and one white parent. She is taking care of six baby rabbits. Sarah (four years old and white) looks at the bunnies and asks Corinne how many there are. 'Six,' says Corinne, 'Three boys and three girls.' Sarah asks how she knows that and Corinne answers: 'Well, my father is white, so the three white bunnies are boys. My mother is black, so the two black bunnies are girls.' Sarah counts them: 'That's only five.' Corinne then explains to her, 'Well, you see, this one is black and white, just like me.'***

Children find out that belonging to a certain group automatically means not belonging to another group. If I am a boy, then the feminine element is missing, and vice versa. If I have black curly hair, I will never be a natural blonde. This is an important discovery but, at the same time, also a frustration called 'primary castration'[27] by analysts. Before children realise that gender or skin colour characteristics, for example, are permanent, they can be afraid that the characteristics can change, such as the boy who is afraid that he might lose the penis he has discovered. Here, yet again, what his environment (his figurative mirror) says is important. By talking about the questions and worries that the child has, the child can come to terms with who he or she is. The French ethnopsychologist, Biarnès, explains it as follows: man only becomes man when he has passed through three symbolic 'births', which ultimately make him the person that he is. The first is the natural birth in which the mother creates his body. The second is what psychoanalysts call the 'law of the father' that influences the development of a conscience or culture. And the third is the encounters with other people which influence his development as an individual (Biarnès, 1999).

Many educators are shocked at the stereotypical behaviour that late toddlers and preschool age children display when playing make-believe. Children experiment, after all, with roles when they play and often do this by using behaviour that is far more stereotypical than what they actually see in their environment. Albert Bandura (Verhofstadt *et al*, 1995), one of the pioneers of social learning, discovered that children from the age of three already begin to generalise gender roles. From the age of five onwards, children are extremely aware of the degree to which behaviour conforms to traditional role expectations, and reject behaviour that does not fit into the pattern (for example, they react negatively to boys playing with dolls). Bandura's findings are corroborated by the following observation from an institution in Reggio Emilia, Italy, in which it is clear that toddlers still have an extremely limited view of gender roles.

> ***Mariella, an educator in a daycare centre in Emilia Romagna is playing in the dress-up corner with Matteo, Daniele, Marta and Giulia (all between 24-30 months old). The educator is helping the children paint their lips red, dress up and put on jewellery. Then she asks, 'Tell me, who puts on make-up, the mamas or the papas?' After thinking about it for a moment, all the***

> ***children answer, 'The papas'. The educator then feels obliged to jump in and asks again in a certain tone of voice, 'The papas … or the mamas?' Then, little Marta, clarified the situation: 'The mamas.' The other children agree silently. In their play, the children have, we see, attached no specific masculine or feminine significance to using make-up. Using make-up does not belong exclusively to the feminine role pattern. When they play make-believe, it is simply a part of dressing up, of being confronted with an image of themselves, of playing with their identity. It is very predictable that this group of children, when they are five years old, will react completely differently. (Nigris, 1996b).***

At a later age (young preschool age) children develop extremely rigid ideas concerning gender-specific behaviour. Later still, however, these rigid ideas become more balanced. According to Bandura (Verhofstadt *et al*, 1995), the rigidity of the ideas does not mean the first development of prejudice towards the opposite gender, but is a normal phase of experimentation with what it means to belong or not belong to certain groups. Current researchers also point out the stereotypical views of preschool children about gender roles.

Preschool age

During the preschool age (from three to seven), the realisation of 'what kind of person I am' is carried further than gender or skin colour. Children begin to notice ever more differences in culture: first are the most obvious, such as language differences; later there are also more subtle ones, such as differences in style of dress, eating habits, customs, behaviour, and body language. Because, like adults, they can make the complex world more understandable by categorisation and generalisation, this is often combined with what Derman-Sparks & the ABC Task Force (1989) calls 'pre-prejudices'. By doing this, everything becomes more conveniently arranged, understandable and manageable.

If children do not have enough opportunity to come into contact with diversity, then they will, by generalising, become more and more convinced that there is only one good way to be: namely, theirs. Children who do not come into contact with a handicapped child until they are seven years old might possibly be afraid of that child. Children who have never seen anyone eat with their hands and suddenly see this, will perhaps think the people are 'dirty'. White children who

see a black person for the first time, might think that they have 'dirty hands'; and many young children will brand a homosexual couple as 'wrong' or 'ridiculous' because they are simply not used to seeing such a couple.

Moreover, children are extremely sensitive to reactions from their environment. Through the attitudes of adults, advertisements, media images, books and their surroundings, children will unconsciously form an image of what is proper and what is not. During this period, adults have a great deal of influence on these pre-prejudices and first stereotypes. They are, after all, the role models on which the children model themselves, and they also have a great influence on which images the child receives.

According to classical developmental psychology, during the 'oedipal' period (between approximately three and eight years of age) it is the parents who exert a major influence on the development of norms and values. During this period the boy learns that he cannot take his father's place and the girl her mother's place. Children must accept the fact that they will never be able to become the partner of their parents. From this frustration ('castration', according to psychoanalysts) the desire to become just like the partner of the same gender is born. 'If I can't become the partner of my mother, then I can at least become just like my father' is, somewhat simplistically, the male reasoning. It is a new step in autonomy, and it is this 'solution' that makes children want to adopt their parents' norms and values, according to psychoanalytical thinking (Liaudet, 1998). It is an essential step in the development of gender identity.[28]

Erikson continues here in the same vein. For Erikson (1971), the contrasting 'initiative versus guilt' characterises this period, because it is then that the child adopts the adult (parental) norms, as a result of which the conscience begins to take shape: the child gets an inner voice. Children know that if they act according to their voice, they will be appreciated by significant people in their environment. The conscience can also be a life-long source of unreasonable guilt feelings if the child lacks self-confidence and is confronted with a very rigid moral code.

Harris (1998) teaches us, however, that it is not only the parental norms that are internalised, but also those of other groups: primarily the *peer group*. Preschool children have already found out that norms can vary a great deal from one

group to another. Children, after all, identify not only with adults, but also with peers or, better yet, with other children who are just a bit older and have a certain amount of prestige. They will behave differently at home than in kindergarten, and differently in the playground than at their grandmother's house. Generally, children have no problem with these first forms of multifrenia (multiple identity), provided that the various settings are not hostile towards each other, that communication remains possible, and that there is mutual respect for one another's language, customs, norms and values.

We can easily imagine how difficult it would become for a preschool child if one environment rejects the norms of the other. What are children supposed to think if they say at school that Arabic is an ugly or a weird language, when that is what is spoken at home? And what are children supposed to make of the remarks at school that their warm clothing should be taken off when their mothers emphatically tell them every morning that they must dress warmly?

According to Harris, children have two different ways of dealing with the diversity in their groups of reference. Some children are 'code-switchers' and 'zap' from one set of norms to another. This is particularly the case when there is little dialogue between the two cultures the child belongs to. Others are 'code-blenders' who create a mixture of the various cultures for themselves (Harris, 1998). What is important here is to make sure that we give children every opportunity to make their own choices for a multiform identity, and that the dialogue between the various norms and value systems which children belong to, and want to belong to, remain open. If there is no dialogue but mutual negation or rejection, this will become an extremely difficult task for the child.

It seems, perhaps, as if there is a contradiction between the effortless code-switching of the preschool children, on the one hand, and the conflict, on the other hand. When are the different groups of reference, among which the child flutters, complementary and when are they discordant for the child? One can safely say that the discordant situation arises when two or more of the child's important groups of reference do not respect each other. There is then the danger that a loyalty conflict[29] will arise when the child has the feeling that 'doing the right thing' for one group is, by definition, 'wrong' for the other. The problem lies, therefore, not in changing various groups' attitudes and behaviour,

but in the possible disapproval of this behaviour by one or more reference groups. This also immediately means that it is the task of the environment and, therefore, the educational institution, to make sure that such role conflicts are avoided.

School age

During school age (starting around seven to eight years old) children move into what is classically called the 'latent phase'. According to Piaget (Verhofstadt *et al*, 1995) this is the period of concrete, operational thinking. In other words, this is a period in which children organise the world according to logical laws. It is therefore a period of enormous curiosity, during which children want to know precisely how everything fits together, or can be taken apart; a period of organising and classifying postage stamps, football cards or marbles. It is also a period in which people are put into various categories.

Children want to build things, explore their own boundaries, do useful things in a world that keeps getting bigger: the school, the community, the neighbourhood, and so on. Because of this, children become more competitive, for example who is the fastest, who can jump rope the longest. This is the background for the contrasts between 'skill' and 'inferiority', according to Erikson (1971). Children who are seen by others, and by themselves, as being skilful (partly because of dealing positively with the initiative and guilt from the previous phase) will feel good in this period of competition, and will acquire a place for themselves among their peers. There is a contrast between these children and the children who are less self-confident and who run more of a risk of feeling inferior during this period. Peer groups are an important point of reference during this time. This is why this is also called a period of 'conformity' or 'assimilation'. Children want to conform to group norms and do not want to be seen as exceptions. Children, however, have many groups of reference and elementary school children often even astonish adults at the ease with which they can 'switch codes'.

As far as moral development is concerned, children in this age group achieve, according to Kohlberg (Verhofstadt *et al*, 1995), 'moral relativism'.[30] This means that they can already put their moral judgements (what is right and wrong) into perspective to some extent. Children of around eight years old and older are

extremely aware of moral codes and are very interested in ethical themes such as ecology, fraternity, charity, and solidarity. This is why Norwegian psychologist Raundalen calls the period from eight to 12 years old the 'Golden Age', a period in which prejudices and discriminating behaviour can decrease remarkably and make room for respect and tolerance if educators pay appropriate attention to this. The school and school-age childcare have, according to Raundalen, an enormous responsibility at this stage (Raundalen, 1999). The school will, therefore, need to strengthen its connection with families of various cultures so that the children receive the necessary space in which to experiment.

Adolescence

Adolescence is a period in which the word 'crisis' is most often used, and often in the sense of identity crisis. It is a period that is often characterised by role confusion, loss of a sense of continuity, and contradictory feelings concerning self-image. From a Freudian perspective, adolescence is a period of mourning. This period is characterised by the adolescents disassociating themselves from the image of their parents (the term 'symbolic murder' is often used). The contradiction involved here is that acquiring one's own identity is not solely based on the integration of various successive influences, but is also a question of tearing oneself away; and, by tearing away, dependence becomes even more apparent (Green, 1977).

During this new-found independence, adolescents are often simultaneously ashamed and proud of their heritage. In order to become an adult (and to become a parent oneself, for example) they must accept their origins. This is why earlier problems in connection with identity and one's own 'story of creation' return with great intensity at this point in the evolution. The severity of the adolescents' crisis is, therefore, directly connected to the degree in which their own identity had or had not caused agitation in previous phases (Le Run & Renard, 1997). People must know where they come from in order to know where they are going.

This is, of course, also a period of huge changes: physically (genitally), socially (friendships, being in love) and emotionally. It is with these changes that the definition of self is expressed. Vulnerability, confusion or insecurity are expressed, for example, by the enormous attention adolescents pay to their

60

appearance, the impression they give, or with which group they are associated. In other words, adolescents are extremely occupied with the similarities and differences between the social self and the ideal self. We clearly see here how the importance of individual identity is strongly connected to groups of reference.

More recent developmental psychologists explain it as follows. There are two basic dimensions: the choice (crisis) and the connection (commitment). Crisis indicates a period of turmoil, exploration, decision making, intense questioning or the necessity of making choices with respect to areas that are intrinsically related to personal identity, such as profession, ideology and sexual behaviour. Commitment indicates personal involvement, bonds, development of concern, and initiative in these matters (Verhofstadt *et al*, 1995).

The concepts 'past' and 'project', mentioned earlier, are seldom so noticeable as in adolescence. The past is sometimes something that individuals want to break away from and to conflict with in order to be able to develop their own project. Ultimately, reconciling the past with the self-defined project is no easy task and will be partially determined by the way in which the crises from the previous phases were resolved. Among other factors that are important during this period are: the degree to which adults in various groups of reference can deal with criticism of the groups; the degree to which the adolescent can look for new groups of reference to join; and how the value systems among the various groups can be handled and integrated.

It will certainly be essential during this period to talk to the adolescent in terms of inclusion instead of exclusion. One does not necessarily have to choose between the Turkish or Belgian cultures, between the middle class or bohemian lifestyles, between a narrow-minded or an artistic setting. Often bridges can be found that integrate the positive aspects of the various groups of reference into a personal entity, in agreement with one's own project and with respect for the memories of the past. In the literature, adolescence is often portrayed in terms of conflicts and crises. Nonetheless, it is important to say here that there is, perhaps, no other period in one's life that involves so much energy, so much positive decisiveness, and so much sense of purpose and commitment geared towards influencing one's environment.

Adulthood

Adulthood is presented as a period in which individuals, after having established their own identities, can form intimate relationships without running the risk of losing their own identities (Verhofstadt *et al*, 1995). In Belgium, this is the period following the school years, primarily determined by professional integration. When adults meet each other, one of the invariable questions at the beginning of the conversation is, 'And what do you do?' This question does not imply an interest in someone's hobbies, but is purely a question about one's profession. This meeting ritual says something about the importance of one's professional identity in our utilitarian society, and it shows how difficult it can be for someone who hasn't successfully integrated into the labour force to create a positive self-image and 'social self'. This is why these groups often display identity crises in other areas or choose not to search for any more affiliations.

Conclusion

This chapter gives a concise overview of self-image development; argues the importance of supporting positive self-image development at a very early age; and shows how these various factors are connected. This can be exemplified by studies of adopted children who are raised in families that are very open and accept loyalty towards the biological parents (for example, by talking about them respectfully) so that self-confidence and initiative are sustained. When the adopted children reach adolescence, they will not look for their biological parents so frantically (Juffer, 1993). Another example includes adolescent immigrants who have expressed the intensity of their identity crises by aggressively refusing to conform to any group at all, neither the home setting nor the 'establishment'. They are often young people who have sustained many wounds from repeated negative messages concerning who they are (Verbunt, 1998). Social workers meet many children who, at a very young age, receive little responsive care from their parents and develop an attitude of self-doubt. This makes it difficult to break away from the parents and gain experience, problems arise at school and in forming lasting emotional relationships as adults. We see, therefore, the clear succession of steps in which the trust of the baby can evolve into the autonomy of the toddler, the initiative of the preschool child and the skilful elementary school child who has a strong basis on which to write his own story as an adolescent. This story is, of course, not finished at adulthood. Every day a bit is added. Our most essential characteristic is our eternal immaturity.

62

From this overview of our self-image development, we can also draw a few conclusions for educating young children in childcare and at school. When taking care of new children, the carers must pay a great deal of attention to ensuring the reciprocal adjustment between the home and the institution. In this way, neither the parents' nor the children's trust will be violated. At the same time, it is important that toddlers and preschoolers have constant points of recognition in their surroundings, that they continually receive positive images from all groups they belong to, and that these images or representations contain sufficient diversity. Toddlers and preschool children who encounter significant diversity in their daily lives will have an advantage. They can build a flexible, multiple identity for themselves, and a positive self-image that is not rigid or narrow, one that can be adjusted to changing contexts without them losing sight of themselves. However, we know that simply bringing children in contact with diversity is not sufficient for learning to deal with it. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Children who learn to deal constructively with diversity will, perhaps, have a greater chance to communicate easily and function in the 21st century. In addition, as Jerome Bruner intimates, educators should no longer see it as their task to teach children to 'assimilate' or conform, but to prepare them for life in the fast changing world in which they are growing up (1996).

Notes

17. Jerome Bruner (1996) 'The culture of education'; Harvard University Press, London.

18. Erik Erikson (1902-1994) received his psychoanalytical training from Anna Freud. He later added a developmental psychology and social dimension to the work of Freud. Here he is chiefly known for his study of the problems of identity and his theories about identity development, ideas which are still very widespread today.

19. A film by Elia Kazan (1955) based on the novel of the same name by John Steinbeck (1952).

20. Whereas 'content' means satisfaction with particular events or accomplishments, 'contentment' is more a general feeling, separate from a particular situation. It is an aspect of the personality. According to Brussels psychiatrist Karel Roelants, it is even the most essential aspect.

21. Professor Jaak Billiet is connected to the School of Sociology at the Catholic University Leuven in Belgium. Hans de Witte works at the Higher Institute for Labour at the same university. They have been conducting research for years on the attitudes towards extremist right-wing groups in Flanders.

22. The word 'immigrants' here refers to people who have recently immigrated. The term 'immigrant' is often used to indicate those whose parents or grandparents were at one time immigrants. In the latter meaning, the term defines people by their past instead of their present or future. For this reason, we are reluctant to use this term.

23. In Chapter Six, 'On to the family', we will see that, as far as childrearing customs are concerned, most families with a non-Western background belong to this group. In Chapter Eight, 'The Tower of Babel', we will delve into the consequences for each of these types of acquiring a second language.

24. The terms 'institution' and 'educational institution' in this book refer to the daycare centre, playground, family daycare provider or preschool. Family daycare providers are, indeed, explicitly included in this term, as they are part of the social structure in childcare and, as such, are part of the 'public domain'.

25. Françoise Dolto (1908-1988) was a French psychoanalyst and worked for nearly forty years as a therapist in a Parisian hospital. She belongs to the Lacanian stream in psychoanalysis and became famous in the 1970s and 1980s because of her therapeutic work with children. Because she regularly appeared in the media, she became well-known far beyond the French borders and her work has had an enormous influence on the understanding of young children in French speaking regions. Some of her best known works appear in the 'Sources' section of this book.

26. This relates to the work of Van IJzendoorn *et al* (1982) in the Netherlands.

27. 'Man is handicapped (*infirme*) in comparison to woman, and woman is handicapped in comparison to man. Something is always lacking, they both miss something,' according to Dolto (1984).

28. Moreover, we will see that this reasoning can certainly be criticised because it does not sufficiently emphasise the influence that peers have on identity and because it is also misused to generalise one (Western) childrearing model (even though ethnopsychologists such as Biarnès indicate that oedipal conflicts are universal).

29. We will return to this concept in Chapter Six, 'On to the family'. Chapter Eight, 'The Tower of Babel', develops this idea more concretely with respect to multilingualism.

30. We will return to Lawrence Kohlberg's cognitive moral theory in Chapter Three, 'The Other.'

Chapter three

The Other

In the previous chapter we dealt extensively with the importance of supporting the individual (multiple) identity of every child, writing one's own story, helping children to create their own self-image – one that allows bonding with a number of groups. This is only one side of the childrearing coin. The other side is helping children to deal with others respectfully.

'Raising children to respect others' is one way to put it. Depending upon the background or convictions of the educator, this can be called raising children to be public spirited; empathetic childrearing; and/or moral childrearing. Questions can be raised as to whether these concepts are outdated in a post-modern society; or if there is a place in a multiform society (as discussed in Chapter One), where there are no longer universal norms and values, to talk about 'the other', and the moral implications connected with it.

Practically every value system (including humanistic, Christian, and Islamic) is concerned with 'peaceful coexistence'. This concern is also present among various groups, each with its own interests in the political interpretation of this term. Peaceful coexistence defines our modern democracy, and attempts to solve the dilemma between the individual and society. It is not the individual who is most important vis-à-vis the group, nor the group vis-à-vis the individual; both must be able to exist in harmony. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, calls this 'preparing the child for a responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, sexual equality and friendship among all peoples, ethnic nationalities and religious groups' (Article 29). An individual's own story does not, after all, take place in a vacuum. It has a place among people who are similar and people who are different.

However, the issue that forms the basis for this chapter is not solely ethical, it is also about enlightened self-interest, for both the individual and for tomorrow's society. The previous chapter dealt with the importance of preparing children for life in a quickly changing, complex and heterogeneous society. Anyone who raises children today with a homogenous view of the world and a feeling of superiority does not allow them to develop the social skills that will be increasingly important in the future. For society as a whole, preparing children to deal with far-reaching globalisation is the essence of enlightened self-interest.

The world of tomorrow will be one in which economic and other aspects are examined not by country, but by continent, or even on a world scale. Just as modern businesses spend large sums of money on teaching their managers to deal with other cultures, social, economic and cultural globalisation forces us to prepare our children to become world citizens. This is in the interest of all children as well as society.

How can various social, cultural, economic, ethnic and other groups deal peacefully with each other? In dealing with this question, it is useful to have a broad vision of diversity because children will come into contact with all of these differences: differences in gender, ethnicity, culture, sexual preference, and physical ability. The essential point in this chapter is finding common ground: using the image that we have of people who are different, and learning how best to deal with that difference. Or as Chérif Khaznadar has stated:[31]

> ***Up to what point can one be himself or herself and demand the right to be different, without lapsing into withdrawal and shutting others out? Where is the boundary between a legitimate quest for a group one can belong to and the rejection of others? It is this question that, since the fall of the Berlin Wall, is the basis of many of the conflicts in the world.*** *(Khaznadar, 1999)*

Other authors have also raised this as the most essential question. The Dutch sociologist, De Swaan, in a television interview, put this strikingly:

> ***The right question is, how can you be considerate of others without damaging your own values? This is the paramount question; this is what it***

68

> ***is all about in the discussion between universality and relativism: how you can be considerate of other people and, at the same time, hold onto what is important to yourself. This is why you must never ask ethnic or nationalistic movements what it is they want to say, how great their red hats are, how nice their songs are or how extraordinary their history is. You must ask them only one question: how do you deal with others? For, in all nationalism and ethnicity, there is often something nice, something protective and sweet: keeping the Friesian language alive, preserving Surinamese culture. However, in Eastern Europe this same ethnicity is murderous. There must be a difference, and that difference is incorporated into a question: you can be ethnic, you can be nationalistic, you can be God knows what, but you must answer one question: how do you want to relate to other people? (de Swaan in Hoffman & Arts, 1994).***[32]

To answer this question, educators must look deeply into the way in which the image of the 'other' is formed in order to reflect upon their role in their own area: the childcare centre, the family daycare providers, the playground, and the elementary school. How can we help children – now and later – to meet the 'other', the unknown, with an open mind? How can we support them to not shut themselves off, but to meet the 'other', to learn to understand him or her and, at the very least, make communication possible? Of importance in this are such concepts as 'empathy', 'respect', and 'tolerance' on the one side, and 'prejudice' and 'stereotypes' on the other. One can compare this to Janus's Face[33]: on the one hand, we must offer children sufficient security, familiarity and predictability to create a solid self-image; on the other hand, we must confront children often enough with 'being different' and with change, and make these discussible so that their social skills are not limited by a rigid world view. These are two different, but strongly connected goals, and are important challenges for those who work with children. 'The school of the 21st century, the century of communication, flexibility and globalisation, can only be a school of diversity', according to Biarnès (1999) in the introduction of an extensive book on the future of education.

In this chapter, we first ask ourselves how the image of the 'other' develops, and how and why prejudices appear at certain moments. A following chapter will deal with possible interventions in this process.

63

A strange animal

How do children obtain both an image of the groups they do belong to, and of the groups they do not belong to? This is not an easily answered question, and children's images can sometimes be surprising. An example in which three children let their images be seen is the following. One afternoon, Eva, Max and Mira put on a small play for their parents. The play consists of scenes from the daily life of a man, woman and child, and it does not have a great deal of action or dialogue. They get up, have breakfast, prepare and eat dinner, wash dishes, have supper and end the day with the three of them watching television. Max, the man, regularly leaves the house to go to work. By the end of the play – to the parents' astonishment – Eva, the woman, has done nothing but cook, wash dishes and taken care of Mira, the child. In contrast to the play, each child's parents had always both gone to work, cooked and did the dishes with explicit equal rights in the family for men and women. The children themselves have always had both dolls and trucks to play with; and at school they are all in classes where nearly all the children are in the same situation. How is it then possible that these children have thought up a scenario with explicit gender division that does not occur in their own everyday lives?

Why do boys still hang up 'No Girls' signs in their rooms even though they have been to school with girls for years? Why do girls think boys are stupid, even though they do not think this of most boys at school? Why do the daughters of couples who raise children in a non-sex stereotyped way stay out of the garage and ask for dolls to play with? And why are the little boys more inclined to use dolls as a sledgehammer than a comfort toy? In summary, how do boys construct their images of girls and vice versa? And how do children create an image of the members of the groups that they do not belong to? How do stereotypes and prejudices originate?

There is plenty of research concerning the development of prejudice in children of all ages. Since Horowitz's research in 1936 (see Aboud 1988), a great deal of data has been collected, even though many questions have remained unanswered. Most of the research was carried out in the United States where the image that black and white communities had about themselves and about each other was closely studied. The goal of this research was to discover how racism originated. A later group, the 'School of Bristol', also carried out research based

on the same questions. Unfortunately, our understanding of this subject today is still largely determined by what has been published in a limited number of countries – the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Vinsonneau, 1996).

The methodology was typical for research into the origins of racism. In 1947, Clark & Clark (see Aboud 1988; Vinsonneau 1996) developed a questionnaire based on photographs of dolls with various skin colours. These pictures were shown to children with the question: which doll would they most like to play with? Later, in 1975, Williams, Bert & Boswell (see Aboud 1988; Vinsonneau 1996) developed the PRAM (Pre-school Racial Attitude Measure), a measuring instrument to chart racial attitudes in young children. Just like other tests from that period,[34] they always worked with photos of girls and boys of various ethnic groups. Children were asked questions that were intended to indicate budding stereotypes. A typical question sounded like this: 'A cat has fallen into the water but, luckily, it was saved. Which of these boys do you think saved it?'

Most of these methods implied a forced choice: when the child chose one picture as the 'good' child, it automatically meant that the others were 'bad'. The methodology of this research has been heavily criticised: by showing children photos from which they must choose, the assumption was made that the preference for one photo is equal to the rejection of the other, which, of course, does not have to be the case. Later on, the testing became more carefully shaded and allowed a more graded approach (Aboud, 1988; Vinsonneau, 1996).[35]

The material that was used was a simplification of reality and was geared towards skin colour as a meaningful differentiation between people, while no research had been done to determine whether or not the children themselves consider this to be relevant. The situation in the United States, in which there are various ethnic groups and where skin colour historically has played an extremely important role, is after all, not the same as in Europe. It is, therefore, not clear if the conclusions that were drawn concerning racial differences also apply to other differences. On balance, it is interesting to see that later research, such as that done by Jahoda, has clearly demonstrated that children give different answers to test questions when the researcher belongs to a different ethnic group (Vinsonneau, 1996).[36]

In spite of this criticism, the 60 years of research has led to some important insights. We now know that four year old children have an 'ethnic awareness': they are not only conscious of the ethnic group they belong to and of the existence of other ethnic groups, but they already attach a value judgement to it. The white four year olds have, in general, a more positive image of whites than of others. A positive self-image is, however, not necessarily the case for non white children. Some of them consider whites to be 'better' than the group they themselves belong to, while others are more inclined to choose those who look like them. Between four and seven years old, this latter view appears to become increasingly stronger (Aboud, 1988).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, in recent years, an entire method of education without prejudice has been developed based on these and other pieces of research and on the observations of those who work in education. This approach, called the Anti-Bias Curriculum, originated, for the most part, in the same countries that were actively involved in the research into the origins of racism. Two prominent examples are the work of Derman-Sparks & the ABC Task Force (1989) in the United States, and that of Ann Stonehouse (1991) in Australia. Their basic premise comes down to the following: starting around the age of two, children begin to notice differences in appearances. Differences in gender, skin colour and other externals are the first to be noticed. Then they notice differences in hair structure, in the shape of the eyes, nose or mouth. Soon, the children also notice other differences, such as language, eating habits, or dress (Derman-Sparks & the ABC Task Force, 1989; King *et al*, 1994; Vandenbroeck, 1998a). Still later, children begin to see differences in social classes, and they start to make more complex connections between these differences, so that it is not uncommon to hear a child, by the end of elementary school, claim that black people are poor.

Adults often find it difficult to hear such statements from children, as it is believed that children are innocent and cannot have racist attitudes. Many adults deny instead of recognise the existence of prejudice in children (Alibhai-Brown, 1993). In practice, we certainly do notice that children or adults who are, in one way or another, 'different' conjure up negative associations in children as young as two or three years old.

In the experience of practice in Europe, the association between a dark skin colour and 'dirty' or 'grubby' is often noticeable at that age, and can be seen when a child refuses to take a black child's hand or to play with black dolls. The early association of 'different language = stupid' was observed in a two and a half year old girl who was handing out puzzles to her peers at the crèche, and gave a baby puzzle to a French speaking girl 'because she's not so good at it yet.' The step from these early associations (also called 'pre-prejudices') to the first forms of discrimination is made quickly. For example, when a group of four year olds did not want a black girl to play the 'Little Mermaid' because the Mermaid has to be white (Vandenbroeck, 1998a). Various authors do not always agree with the age at which prejudices come to the surface. However, the consensus is that the toddler and preschool ages are crucial. This is why it is so important to bring children in these age groups into contact with diversity and to actively teach them to deal with it.

This subject will be touched upon again, but let us first look at the question of how children develop prejudices at such a young age. It is important to acquire an insight into the origin of prejudice, so that educational practices that prepare children to deal with variety in a heterogeneous society can be developed. The insights and explanations vary depending on whether or not more importance is attached to psychological (individual) factors or to social influences (sociological and anthropological factors). Neither is sufficient in itself to provide a complete explanation because they both play an important role. After considering the psychological elements and social factors, a social-cognitive model of development will be briefly discussed.

Psychological explanations

Cognitive development

Developmental psychology tells us that children can put themselves in someone else's shoes and show signs of compassion at a very early age. A 15 month old toddler, for example, whose mother dropped exhausted into a chair, came running up to her with a bottle which was put lovingly into her mouth. In the earliest stage, the child psychiatrist Daniel Stern (quoted in Bruner, 1996) calls the empathy between mother and child 'attunement'. Starting around the second birthday, we see an increase in this type of behaviour. According to Kazan (see Kohnstamm, 1991), children in various cultures are given a certain amount of

responsibility around that age. Modern developmental psychologists display a renewed interest in this subject and are studying what they call the development of the 'inter-subjectivity', 'how people learn what others think, and how they themselves adapt to it'.[37]

Some interesting research is being done among modern developmental psychologists, such as that done by Scaife and Bruner (1996) who discovered that babies are already able to follow their mothers' eyes and can focus on the same object that their mother is looking at. This is the earliest form of taking the same viewpoint as another. This same skill goes together with achieving long-lasting eye contact between mother and child and is, in that respect, typically human. No other mammal uses long lasting eye contact as a sign of affection; for most animals, it is more likely to be followed by aggression (Bruner, 1996).

In the previous chapter we saw how children further broaden their view of themselves and of others as their contact with persons other than the primary caretaker is widened. In doing this, from six months they develop more and more 'mental images': conceptions of reality. If the primary caretaker leaves, they can still hold on to an image of that person. We see this, for example, in the attachment to transitional objects which remind them of the person they miss.[38] Gradually, children also begin to develop images of others that are not based on their own direct experience. These latter images originate through generalisations. Nobody would cross a street in a strange city without looking. Experience with dozens of other streets tells us that there are cars speeding along and we use that knowledge on an unknown street. Using this reasoning, we assume that the creation of mental images is an important step in the development of thinking, and that children (and adults) create categories in order to be able to comprehend the complexity of the world and, therefore, have the tendency to think in stereotypes. This intellectual (cognitive) approach certainly contains part of the psychological explanation, but should also be augmented with other elements of a more emotional nature.

Emotional explanations: fear and jealousy

Various authors emphasise that children, in their endeavour to create a positive self-image, want to identify with one group and therefore oppose other groups.

This 'motivational approach' implies that a low opinion of others helps to support a positive self-image. This element has been supported in data that appeared when 15 young adults who had served prison sentences in various European countries for racial violence were questioned. In many cases, these were men from the lowest rungs of the social ladder, with lower-level schooling and long-term unemployment, who were often themselves victims of a lack of respect. For them, the appearance of a new group was a gift. When they were questioned, every single one of them stated: 'At least I'm white (or Norwegian, or German, or…)' By these statements, they make it clear that they have found a group which is even lower on their social scale and from which they could clearly differentiate themselves (Raundalen, 1999). This is corroborated by research in Flanders that showed that less educated individuals are more inclined to view immigrants as a threat to their economic welfare and culture, and they are, therefore, more inclined to embrace the ideologies of racist organisations (Billiet & De Witte, 1995).

Closely related to this motivational explanation is the fact that all that is foreign inspires fear. As mentioned at the beginning of this book, in the comic book Tin *Tin in Tibet*, possibly one of the most profound stories that the Belgian cartoonist Hergé (1960) created, Tin Tin goes in search of his friend Chang, who was supposedly kidnapped by the Yeti, the Abominable Snowman. During his expedition, he is accompanied by a few companions, but as the story progresses, one by one, the other members of the expedition drop off. Only the grumbling Captain Haddock remains with Tin Tin. But even he loses sight of Tin Tin at the final, decisive moment so that Tin Tin ultimately – alone and deserted – comes face to face with the Yeti. At the end of the story, it turns out that the Yeti is not abominable at all; he is simply a lonely ape-man who has taken very good care of Chang all this time. The story is a clear and shining metaphor for the fear that Tin Tin has for something within himself, fear that is fed by the stories about the Yeti and that he ultimately overcomes in solitude by looking it in the eyes and literally throwing light on it.[39]

It is this fear that Norwegian researcher Magne Raundalen (1999) finds the most important reason why children develop negative ideas about people who are 'different'.[40] Gisèle Halimi (1999) echoes this by stating that the rejection of the 'other' is the desire to dominate that which is foreign.[41] Racism, according to

Halimi, is essentially the fear of the other, or rather, of those aspects of the other that we don't want to see in ourselves. Thus, the long-standing domination of men over women is a result of the fear that man has of his own feminine side.

Halimi calls this a 'phantasmic' rejection of something that one has constructed to combat fear (Halimi, 1999). She is supported in this by Hélène Ahrweiler[42] who suggested that it is the fear of oneself that causes the fear of others. This concept is closely connected to the idea that self-confidence and a positive self-image are constructed from a rejection of what is different, and thus, the 'other' frightens us. It is the model of the majority that wants to make everyone the same. Nevertheless, one's own identity automatically implies the existence of difference: one can only be who they are because there is someone else nearby. At the most basic level, the first 'other' that one discovers is the other gender (Ahrweiler, 1999).

This reasoning can also be found in the psychoanalytical literature. In the essay 'The impossible couple', the Ghent psychoanalyst Paul Verhaeghe[43] explains that the man and the woman are, respectively, each other's 'phantoms'; that fear is a basic emotion that cannot hide other feelings, but that, equally, other emotions such as aggression and hate can certainly originate from fear. He explains that the position that man attributes to woman continually balances between the two extremes of hate and love, but in both cases, the woman is feared (Verhaeghe, 1999). According to Françoise Dolto (see Liaudet, 1998), the culture of male superiority that has been instilled in our society is specifically the result of the inferiority that men feel because they cannot bear children. It is more a kind of jealousy than fear. Because of their inability to bear children and the consequent insecurity (the father does not become the father until the mother labels him as such), men feel compelled to institute male supremacy.

However you look at it, a male child can, indeed, only discover that he is a boy when he discovers girls *and* that he is not one of them. This can be disappointing or frightening. One can also apply this reasoning to other prejudices and forms of discrimination that are not gender oriented. Thus, white children can only become conscious of their whiteness when they find out that non-whites exist; or children understand their own physical state when they are faced with children with special needs. In the first example, children will

gradually learn about the permanence of skin colour. In the second example, however, that permanence will be questioned. These examples show that the confrontation with the 'other' can have both a calming and frightening effect: fear about what one does not want to acknowledge in oneself, and fear about what could happen. The discovery of oneself is linked with the discovery of the 'other' and the discovery of the difference.

Scapegoats and 'black sheep'

French psychologist Colette Chiland (see Renard & Guilbert, 1998) formulated the difference in gender, which can easily be applied to other differences, as the discovery that there are other people 'like me'.[44] At the same time, the discovery is made that there are other people who are not like me. No one is therefore, a complete person; we are only part of a person – a part of what is possible – and what we are not remains very mysterious. This explains why everyone looks for support within their own group in order to convince themselves that it is good to be the way they are. This results in both groups gradually belittling each other and attributing negative characteristics to the other group.

It can be easily seen that individuals and groups make those who clearly differ from the majority into scapegoats, so they don't have to cast doubt upon themselves. As fear increases within the group or the society, so does aggression towards the scapegoat. It is the sad, but classic, story of the Jews, the Gypsies, and the homosexuals during the Great Depression of the 1930s; of North African immigrants who are blamed for the imbalance in the social security system in Northwestern continental Europe; and even of the little girl with glasses who is mercilessly bullied in a classroom full of tension.

The way in which children convert fear and tension into aggression towards a weaker figure is movingly portrayed in the famous novel 'Lord of the Flies' by William Golding (1954). In the book, a group of children land on a deserted island and have to depend upon themselves for survival. The children channel their fear of this situation and of something in themselves into rituals surrounding a sort of idol, the Lord of the Flies. Gradually, one of the children – a fat child – is made the scapegoat. As the tension and fear steadily increase, one boy assumes leadership over the group, which has dramatic consequences. Ultimately, the scapegoat is sacrificed. The parallel with the current rise of extreme right wing

racist parties in Europe is clear. Research on attitudes that influence voting behaviour has shown that ethnocentrism is often the expression of feeling threatened, coupled with a feeling of mistrust towards and insufficient protection by government (Scheepers *et al*, 1995).

Fear as an explanatory factor has a long history. As early as the 1950s, Theodore Adorno (see Aboud, 1988, Meertens, 1997) developed his famous 'Inner State Theory' on the origin of prejudice and discrimination in children based on psychological processes that had to do with fear, and more specifically, with fear that arises from unresolved internal conflicts in childhood. Children's desire to please their parents will fail regularly. This is a frustrating experience for the children and is often followed by punishment by the parents. This inspires fear in the children, and this fear often expresses itself as aggression. Adorno believes that it is important that educators help children find an acceptable manner of expressing this aggression. If parents rigidly and authoritatively prevent this, the aggression will then become directed through prejudice and discrimination towards others. Adorno was among the first to make a connection between self-image development and the origin of negative attitudes about others.[45]

To summarise, the following psychological aspects can provide an insight into why children develop prejudices: the fact that people tend to think in categories and to generalise mental images; and the fact that insecurity leads to two outcomes – discrimination against those who occupy a lower rung on the social ladder, and fear inspired by people who are different. By themselves, these aspects are insufficient to explain why prejudices develop in some places and not in others.

It is important when considering these psychological aspects not to lose sight of what has been said in previous chapters. Important factors, such as fear, do not have the same effect on everyone. Turning fear into aggression is dependent upon many personality characteristics. One of the most important elements in this remains the degree to which the individual has been raised with a strong self-image that allows flexibility. Finding the reason purely in psychological factors is not enough, and therefore it is necessary to consider models of social explanation.

Models of social explanation

Social reflection

Many authors have pointed out that the image that we have created of the world and of others is partially dependent upon the environment and culture in which we are raised. My personal view of people who belong to other groups is partly the result of my own history, and partly the ideas of the groups with whom I identify. For example, my general, stereotypical view of policemen is only partly formed by my personal meetings with them. It is also influenced by my current groups' image of policemen, or my past groups' image, such as a group of rebellious students objecting to a university tuition increase. An acquaintance of mine is a policeman. The fact that we sometimes have a beer together does not, per se, change my general image of, or prejudice about policemen. In the same vein, my prejudice against policemen was not changed by my meeting a Ghent policeman who, extremely courteously, explained to a non-Dutch speaking inhabitant what he should do about his driver's licence.

Thus, it is also true that men's image of women and vice versa is not solely dependent upon their personal experiences, even though these play an important role. It also depends on how that personal experience fits within the cultural framework of the group or groups to which they belong. When dealing with rigid ideas and generalisations about others, it is not important whether or not one's own group's opinion has any truth to it. What is important is that when we meet another member of that group (another policeman, for example), we do not start from scratch, as we have already built up an image of that group. What is important is that the new person will be measured against the image that we already have of that group. This can make the meeting more difficult, and because of this, the individuals involved will often be short-changed.
The fact that our environment influences our opinions about others is something that we are all susceptible to, even as educators. Educators work within a social context in which certain beliefs are held which they cannot avoid. For example, the book, 'Islam for non-believers' by Lucas Catherine (1997) opens with the following lines:

> ***Beheadings, floggings, bombings: this is what you think about when you read the word Islam. Ever since the development of Moslem fundamentalism (1928), we live in a time in which 'the houses of God are run by men who***

> ***– led by the verses of the Koran – sow terror, in the same way that other men enjoy an evening in the pub,' as an Arabian poet wrote who lived just before the Crusades.***

Catherine meant this ironically, but he certainly grasped the general feeling that Islam is often perceived as a threat by non-Muslims.[46] Even if educators do not agree with this, because it is a widely held view it has an influence on them. A few other examples of widely held erroneous views that colour the image of educators are: homosexual parents do not pass a correct gender identity on to their children; Asian parents want their children to excel in school; Muslim families have a family oriented culture, as opposed to Western families who have an individually oriented culture; and, parents of handicapped children are often overprotective. These generalisations can hamper meetings between educators and parents, and leave too little room for exceptions and for the other's own story.

Thus we see that the social environment plays a major role. We do not learn solely through personal, direct experience. On the contrary, we learn much more by hearing what others think about the world. The English-language literature speaks of the concept of 'prevailing prejudice', in which children notice and adopt societal prejudices. Chiland (Renard & Guilbert, 1998) points out that in order to discover who they themselves are, children look for signs of difference and accept social stereotypes. This is why an education without prejudice is not limited to preventing prejudices from developing, but actively challenges the prejudices that children inevitably acquire.

The title of a recent book, 'Unlearning discrimination in the early years' (Brown, 1998), typifies this approach. As the book's title explicitly indicates, the goal of an 'anti-bias approach'[47] is to unlearn prejudices that have already been learned. However, this approach puts too much emphasis on the social environment – the prevailing prejudice – as *the* explanatory factor for prejudice. It assumes that children are inherently good, but have been negatively influenced by adults. But it could be argued that children are not simply empty vessels to be filled by their environment (see Dahlberg *et al*, 2000) and, if this is the case, perhaps they do not take on the prevailing prejudices uncritically. Nonetheless, whatever one believes, an important factor which should be taken into account is that children are influenced by the views and prejudices of significant others.

Those significant others are not only adults, but are certainly also other children, as Judith Rich Harris (1998) points out in her book 'The nurture assumption'. She deals extensively with the way in which children influence each other in their views about themselves and in the image that they create of others. Thus, she has developed an explanation for the extremely stereotypical views that toddlers and pre-schoolers have about boys and girls. She believes that boys do not identify with men and girls with women, as Sigmund Freud had us believe, but that as far as children are concerned, adults belong to a different group from them. Boys identify with boys and girls with girls. They get their stereotypical behaviour from each other and not from the adult world. Harris continues by saying that girls would rather play with girls because they have more in common with each other. This causes a group effect, in which these traits are reinforced and the girls become even more alike, and, therefore, more different from boys. Thus it is not the adults who, in a manner of speaking, make girls good and sweet and boys wild and rough: it is their little friends. The image that girls have of boys – and vice versa – is formed in those groups in the same way. Because they gradually play less and less with each other, the group image that they have of each other is not corrected through experience. Boys who behave like girls, and girls who behave like boys in elementary school, for example, are teased. Children compare themselves, after all, to their peers and decide then that 'I am the same' or 'I am different' (Harris, 1998).

The idea that children derive their gender and group identities chiefly or exclusively from the girls and boys they play with is, perhaps, a simplification of reality, but Harris' theory does provide some useful insights. First, raising boys and girls in a mixed group is not sufficient to create a balanced, non-stereotypical image of each other. And second, subgroups (such as the subgroup 'boys' and the subgroup 'girls') create an image of what it is like to belong to the group, and, at the same time, an image of what it is like *not* to belong. In the case of boys and girls, we can call these images 'gender stereotypes'. Whether these stereotypical views contain a basis of truth or not is not relevant here. What is relevant is that these stereotypes cause individual children who do not comply with the norms of the group to be treated unfairly.

This shows us that educators who are committed to stimulating a healthy identity as well as encouraging interaction with others, cannot simply allow

subgroups to do as they like. Harris has found that animosity between subgroups on playgrounds and in schools occurs most frequently in places where an adult presence is the least clearly felt. Based on this single example, the challenge for educators is to give boys and girls the feeling that it is good to be the gender they are, without giving them a feeling of superiority. An extension of this would be to allow boys and girls to develop a group feeling and, at the same time, allow for exceptions.

This example of gender could be expanded to other subgroups, including cultural groups, sports groups, intellectuals, language groups, socio-economic classes, and groups based on sexual orientation. Even if the images of the 'others' do not originate per se in the same way as differences in gender, they are all formed in subgroups to which children (and parents) belong to. Knowing this, we can continually ask how the contact between the various groups is going; how they create images of themselves and of others; and how these images teach them to get along with others. We could also ask if they are hampered in their relationships with people who are different because of their own stereotypes or prejudices.

The manner in which children are influenced by their environment is generally called 'social reflection'. But this model is inadequate if 'social stratification' is not examined at the same time. This means that the various groups in society are not equal, but are hierarchically arranged (Aboud, 1988).

Social stratification: power

Bruner (1996) has pointed out that the image we have of people who belong to another group is associated with *power*. Not all groups are equal; some are more privileged than others. Differences in power, status and wealth play an important role in the image that we have of the Unknown. To give a few examples: for years, the heart of economic power in Belgium lay within the wealthier Walloon population, and the dominant image of the Fleming was one of a backward farmer whose language excluded any kind of refinement. Evidence of this is the definition of the *Flamand* (the Fleming) in a French language dictionary published just before World War II: '*Tribu du Nord, qui se nourrit de pommes de terre*' ('potato-eating tribe from the north'). Today, the roles are reversed: the riches are more likely to be found in Flanders and the

most accepted image of the Fleming is that of the hard working labourer, in contrast to the lazy, exploitative Walloon. It is an image that was even publicly supported by some Flemish authorities.

The image that has been created of Turkish and Moroccan Belgians is completely different from that of non-Belgians who tend to belong to the highest socio-economic classes such as, for example, the Americans and the Danes. This can be seen in any number of subtle ways. A Turkish Belgian whose native language is Turkish and who speaks – as his second language – good, but not perfect, Flemish is called a 'foreign speaker'. An Englishman or a Frenchman whose Dutch is just as good is likely to be admiringly called 'bilingual'. The belief is that those who come to live in the Netherlands or Belgium from the area around the Mediterranean and who have a low social status must become 'integrated', while this is not necessarily believed of the Jewish community in Antwerp or the Japanese community in Brussels, even though these groups are clearly 'different': these communities have their own subculture, their own schools and their own social network, but also have a relatively high social status.

The image of Eastern Europeans during the last 10 years changed drastically after the Iron Curtain was raised and the Eastern block collapsed economically. Cynically, it could be said that Western Europeans had more respect for the Russians when they were still afraid of them. Another example is that, for generations, economic power lay primarily in the hands of men. The accepted image of the capacities of women has changed enormously, in part because they have become more economically powerful.

When two groups who are in entirely different socio-economic situations meet, it is extremely difficult for them to meet as equals and not to assume a 'protective' or paternalistic attitude. This is also where the boundary of tolerance lies.[48] The meeting of the 'other' is partially determined by the fact that the one who has the power determines the relationship, as is contended by Rudi Doom.[49] He takes this one step further and argues that major socio-economic differences make dialogue impossible. He also puts forth a provocative thought when he says that 'in colonial Congo, we also preferred to see happy, singing blacks. We were prepared to treat them humanely, even lovingly. However, there

were limits to our tolerance of their differences: until they themselves demanded equality' (Doom, 1998).

In summary, we could say that as children become conscious of which groups they belong to, they also realise which groups are foreign to them. Even if they have little or no contact with other groups, they still form an image and one that is largely determined by the image that others such as parents, educators, and peers have. In this way, everyone creates images of men, women, Moroccan Belgians and Surinamese Dutch; of Welshmen, Hispanics or Asians; of free-thinking liberals, Catholics or Calvinists; of shopkeepers, labourers or doctors; of pop music fans or those who listen to classical music; of the 'underprivileged'; the hearing-impaired; the unemployed; political refugees, and so on. The list is endless.

However, some refinement is appropriate here as well. Not everyone adopts the prejudices of their groups in the same way. In every group there are people who are critical, who seek out another opinion, who enter into discussions, who lead the fight against social stratification, and so on. Here too, the aspects of personality which deal with the creation of self-confidence and basic trust in others becomes important. A stereotypical image does not automatically lead to discriminating prejudices. Meertens (1997) only uses the term 'prejudice' to describe a situation where there is a 'learned predisposition to consistently make unfavourable judgements about a group as a whole or about an individual because he or she is a member of that group.'

In his further analysis, he states that prejudice is based on three components: the cognitive, affective and behavioural. The cognitive (intellectual) consists of stereotypes, erroneous ideas and generalisations about a certain group. While stereotypes may contain a grain of truth, they are never correct in their generalisations because they ignore individual differences. The second component is the affective, the instinctive. Here, Meertens refers to feelings – in particular, negative feelings – and emotions that come to the surface whenever we think about a specific group or a member of that group. Finally, the behavioural component means that the image one has of a group, and the negative feelings that accompany it, lead to discriminatory behaviour (Meertens, 1997).

84

It is important to differentiate between these three components as it is not a given that all three components are present. Thus, stereotypes and negative feelings towards a certain group do not automatically lead to acts of discrimination. There are all sorts of reasons why people do not express their negative feelings. Conversely, one can unwittingly discriminate without being conscious of it. This was, for example, the case in a kindergarten class that developed an entire cultural curriculum, complete with regular field trips to the theatre and museums. Every time they went somewhere, the children were expected to bring the necessary money with them. However, the group forgot to find a solution for those parents who could not afford this. The differentiation between the three components is also relevant, because we must realise that it is not the cognitive component that influences negative emotions. For example, receiving objective information about another group does not automatically mean that the feelings of fear or aggression towards that group change. This is an error in reasoning that is frequently made: it is thought that simply giving all kinds of correct information will make the prejudice disappear. Innumerable books full of 'objective' information on Islam, the labour market and so forth, have, unfortunately, done little to change the image of 'immigrants' in some people's eyes.

A model of social-cognitive development

Frances Aboud and others[50] have developed a model that takes into account the psychological and social factors that help to explain the origin of prejudice. The model takes several elements discussed earlier, and differentiates between the various stages in child development. Aboud's (1988) model of social cognitive development states that while prejudices are inevitable, they do not necessarily persist, because they are closely connected to three specific stages in development.

The first phase (babies and toddlers)

Young children are primarily influenced by the affective attachment that they create with those people familiar to them. As a rule, these are people from their own cultural or ethnic group. As a normal evolution in their emotional development, they develop a fear of strangers. This fear reaches its peak during the 'eight-month cling', but even a toddler can be afraid of strangers. The first time young children meet someone who visibly differs from the people they

know, they will have a negative reaction. This has little to do with cognitive stereotypes, but solely with an emotional feeling of uneasiness. The literature review in the preceding pages shows that toddlers often attribute positive characteristics to those belonging to their own ethnic group, but this does not necessarily mean that they have negative opinions about 'others'. This can simply be because young children feel more comfortable with those who resemble them the most.

The second phase

Preschool children start to become extremely curious about who they are and which groups they belong to. 'Who is like me and who is different?' Here, the curiosity is primarily about external differences (gender, ethnicity, and other differences). People who are 'different' are automatically not as welcome, claims Aboud. At this age, children are highly receptive to the social views about 'others' (the prevailing prejudices) that are held in their environment, and unknown persons will quickly be categorised based on their external characteristics. This phase of crude stereotypes is fed by the children's self-centred affective processes.

The third phase

Children aged seven to eight go through major intellectual development, during which they not only have an eye for the group someone belongs to, but also to the individual. According to Piaget, it is the shift from pre-operational to concrete operational thinking. Their approval and/or disapproval of someone is, therefore, based upon the individual and group characteristics. This shows up when children are given tests with pictures to choose from, and they not only look at conspicuous external characteristics, but also start to take more subtle differences into account. This concurs with Raundalen's assessment that prejudices often decrease among the eight to 12 year age group. For this reason, he calls this period the 'golden age' as it is one in which adults have a significant role to play.

In summary, during these three phases, the individual moves through an evolution from the 'self' via the 'group' to the 'individual.'[51] Once we have closely examined all the causes of prejudice and discrimination, the resulting picture can be discouraging. It appears that discrimination is part of human nature. It is, indeed, perhaps inevitable that stereotypes are developed, but there

86

are many indications that these ideas do not continue or lead to discriminating behaviour per se, and do not appear in everyone to the same degree. Preschool institutions and family daycare providers are the first places where children, in all their diversity, enter the public domain. As a result, these are interesting places to experiment with all the theories. In the preceding section, a few points concerning educational applications were discussed, and these will be the focus in the following chapter.

87

Notes

31. Chérif Khaznadar is the director of the Maison des Cultures du Monde in Paris, and chairman of the Cultural Committee of the French National Commission for UNESCO.

32. This quote comes from a television interview done by the Dutch television company VPRO in April 1993. It is taken from a very well thought out book on conducting intercultural conversations (Hoffman & Arts, 1994).

33. Janus was one of the Roman gods. He had two faces and could, therefore, look in two directions at the same time. The Janus temple was also the temple of war and peace.

34. Like, for example, the Projective Prejudice Test by Katz & Zalk (see Vinsonneau, 1996).

35. As in the Social Distance Scale by Verna in 1981 (see Vinsonneau, 1996).

36. Jahoda (as quoted in Vinsonneau 1996) discovered that, when the researcher is Indian, the children systematically rate pictures of Indians higher than when the researcher is white.

37. This is what one calls 'the theory of mind'.

38. This term comes from the English-language psychoanalytic school of thought with such representatives as Donald W. Winnicott (1896-1971) and Melanie Klein (1882-1960).

39. It is no coincidence that this comic book only came about after a long artistic hiatus in Hergé's work. He himself was battling with serious depression and had continual nightmares in which the colour white played an important role. He was under long-term psychoanalysis by the Swiss doctor Ricklin who advised him 'to kill his demon of purity'.

40. Magne Raundalen is a child psychologist at the University of Oslo and is chairman of the Norwegian UNICEF Committee.

88

41. Gisèle Halimi was a French ambassador, lawyer, writer and chairperson of the movement *Choisir la Cause-des-Femmes*, which advocates equal rights for women. She is known beyond France as a champion of equal rights for women. She was born into a Jewish family in Tunisia.

42. Hélène Ahrweiler was employed at the University of Paris as rector of the academy and chairperson of the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. She is presently chairperson of the Université de l'Europe.

43. Professor Paul Verhaeghe is a member of the Department of Psychoanalysis and Consultation Psychology at the University of Ghent.

44. Colette Chiland is a philosopher, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst and taught at Sorbonne University in Paris.

45. Theodore Adorno (1903-1963) was a German philosopher, sociologist, musicologist and psychologist, who belonged to the Frankfurt School. He studied, among other things, dialectics and enlightenment. After the Second World War, he was very committed to the question of how it was possible that the Holocaust could have taken place, and from this he developed his social-psychological theories.

    Adorno was a typical modernist scientist, and post-modern critics like Burman believe that his theory is an example of the 'psychological complex'. Individual psychology in the late 19th and early 20th century in Western Europe reflected the social preoccupations of the time with population quality and mental abilities. These were then translated into policy recommendations on infant and child management, and on education. The contemporary middle-class educational practices lent a scientific legitimation to practices of social regulation and reform (Burman, 1994).

46. The inverse is, of course, just as true. There are also deep seated prejudices towards the 'westerner' within the Arab world. In the epilogue of his detailed overview of the Crusades, Maalouf (1983) wrote that the fear, as well as the fascination, with the Westerner (the *Franj*) today has its roots in the Crusades of the 11th to the 13th

centuries. There, we can find the origin of the deeply rooted stereotypical image of the westerner as a boorish barbarian, the untrustworthy man with no sense of honour. Today, the 'Westerner's' image of Muslims (the Saracens) also contains vestiges of the past.

47. The 'anti-bias approach' is a literal term currently used in English language countries. The word 'anti' typifies its approach. This is further discussed in Chapter Five, 'Two sides of the Ocean'.

48. The boundary of that tolerance (that displays understanding without tampering with social relationships) is acutely articulated in the recent anecdotal novel *Boumkoeur* by Rachid Djaïdani, a 25 year old French author and boxer of Algerian-Sudanese origin, who wrote, 'I like honest people who stand up for social subjects. I do not like S.O.S. Racism [a French anti-racist association], they only come into our neighbourhoods during prime time – over our dead bodies – for the ratings.' (Djaïdani, 1999).

49. Professor Rudi Doom is the chairman of the Department of Third World Studies at the University of Ghent.

50. Frances Aboud is Professor of Psychology at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. Since the 1970s, she has carried out research on the origin of prejudice and has published many works in this area.

51. The phases that Aboud differentiates in the development of prejudices and stereotypes run parallel to the phases that Kohlberg differentiates in moral development. He also believes that he has observed this evolution from 'self' via 'group' to 'individual'. Kohlberg (1927-1987) adopted the theories of Piaget on intellectual development as the basis of his theories on moral development. His ideas have had a huge impact, partly because they were supported by a good deal of cross-cultural empirical research. He developed a complex theory of development, a simplified version of which is provided here with only the main phases.

The first phase in moral development is the phase of naïve hedonism (level 0, according to Kohlberg). The distinction between good and bad is completely determined by one's own feeling of pleasure or discomfort. Good is what makes one

feel good. Bad is what is not wanted. This gradually moves into a pre-conventional phase in which good and bad are determined by reward and punishment.

In the second phase, the conventional phase, the difference between good and bad is primarily determined by the group: what is good is what is allowed according to the rules. The rules are absolute, are not questioned and the child submits unconditionally to prevailing norms. It is chiefly geared towards being a 'good boy or nice girl': towards the things that please the adults.

The third phase, the post-conventional, is one of personal principles, in which the rules of the group are integrated into one's own moral view. Kohlberg refers to this as occurring when the individual goes beyond prevailing norms according to their common sense, which is, of course, not at all the same as being without norms. The individual no longer conforms absolutely to prevailing rules, but can now put these rules into perspective according to the situation. One is oriented towards universal principles of ethics (Aboud, 1988 and Verhofstadt *et al*, 1995).

This model by Kohlberg certainly demands some criticism. It is a western and male-oriented concept, in the sense that it is primarily oriented towards logic and social organisation and less towards interpersonal relationships, as his female colleague, Gilligan has shown (Verhofstadt *et al*, 1995). It is also a classic concept that presents the adult as the ideal and the child as incomplete (and, therefore, to be raised in our image). However, despite this fundamental criticism, it nonetheless provides an interesting framework with which to examine the development of prejudice.

1998

Chapter four

The Meeting

As discussed in the previous chapter, children start creating an image of others in early childhood. Very early on, unfortunately, being different has negative associations – prejudice often arises from fear and generalisations. Children also adopt stereotypical views from others: from adults as well as their peers. As we have already frequently pointed out, educators have a responsibility here to try to provide children with an image of themselves and of others which helps them to be flexible and to adjust to various situations and adapt to *change*. Indeed change is the key word in the society in which they are going to live.

Early childhood centres and other care facilities are ideally placed to approach these objectives. Between the home and society, children will go through a long evolution of change, adjustment, acclimatisation, conflict and negotiation, in short, socialisation. The first place where children, emerging from their trusted surroundings of the *family*, come into contact with another environment is at the care institution. This is where the children have intensive contact with other children and families, often for the first time, who are clearly different from their own.

When there are large differences between a family's lifestyle at home and in public, it is necessary to have an area where confronting different practices can take place, and where one can experiment with the negotiations that stem from this interaction. This is most apparent with children who come from cultural minorities, but it also applies, to a lesser degree, to every family, given their differing habits and norms in the home and in the centre or school. This negotiation, in the first instance, involves the families as well as the institution becoming conscious of the existence of these differences. Precisely because

93

individual or group differences often become apparent for the first time at the centre, these can become learning situations and the first space where children and families can give shape to society: a transitional space.

The socialising function of daycare centres has been extensively documented by ACEPP[52] in France (Combes, 1990; Mony, 1993; Julliard, 1998). Meanwhile, the famous psychoanalyst, Winnicott (1982),[53] said that it is in this transitional space between the inner and outer world that intimate relationships are formed and creativity takes place. In this way, the care institution or the school is the first representation of society in all its diversity. For the child and the parent, it is an experimental space, a first window onto the world.[54] In other words, if the caregivers are successful in bringing negotiations to a positive conclusion and in creating a new culture in the institution which takes all the various home cultures into account, each child and parent will have a preview of how society could be. At the same time, it is also the children's first model of how they can make personal choices in the construction of their own identity. Alongside the educational mission, the institution's social mission needs to be considered.

The essence of the educational institution's function as a transitional space is that it can become a golden mean between two extremes. One extreme is formed by schools or educational institutions that are solely interested in socialisation, in making the individual fit into society by means of the transfer of knowledge and social control, the 'learning by rote' school of education which reduces children to objects. The other extreme is formed by the educational institutions which solely see the child as a subject and no longer embodies any social norms and values (Bourdieu, 1993). In the first extreme, we see a cold-hearted childcare institution: it leaves little room for each child's own rhythm, it offers standard solutions, and describes the children as 'students' in terms of stages of development and averages. In the second extreme the educators have no basis for their institution and can no longer be role models themselves because they no longer embody their own set of values. (Finding a balance between these is discussed further in Chapter Six.)

The premise that childcare institutions have to teach children how to deal with a diverse society was intensively researched in 1994 by the French national

institute, the Centre National de Recherches (CNRS). Over a six month period, interaction between children, parents and educators was closely observed, and this research shows unequivocally that the *crèche parentale* (parental daycare centre) certainly fulfils this role. Researchers Tijus *et al* (1994) argue that the advantage of an environment in which parents are heavily involved in every aspect of the institution is that it influences socialisation as well as intellectual development. Each parent reacts in a very different way, and this is most visible at institutions with greater parental involvement and those in multicultural neighbourhoods. Children who are exposed to these differences try to understand what each of the parents wants. This diversity offers an extremely stimulating environment for children to compare various viewpoints amongst themselves. This research demonstrates that such an environment and its rich interactions – particularly between adults and children – directly stimulates cognitive development.[55]

The example of the *crèche parentale* shows us that educational institutions can fulfil the role that ACEPP calls the 'transitional space' between family and society. Well thought out contact between different families results in children not becoming imprisoned in conflicting models, but instead learning from these differences and, in particular, learning how to deal with diversity (Julliard, 1997). For these reasons, in this chapter, we will further examine the role that the educator can play in the lives of young children before they reach school age. We have already looked at the importance of helping children create a positive self-image, without a feeling of superiority, while respecting others. What are the possible approaches that can be offered?

Being together is not enough

One commonly held belief is that when children come into contact with diversity, they will be less inclined to adopt prejudices. One of the pioneers in the research of the development of prejudice is Theodore Adorno. Apart from his Inner State Theory mentioned in the previous chapter, Adorno also developed the 'Contact Hypothesis' which, for many years, determined how we thought about the origin of prejudice in children. According to this hypothesis, contact between ethnic groups leads to a decrease in prejudice and discrimination: when children are confronted with diversity from a very early age, they are better able to deal with each other's differences.

Unfortunately, a good deal of research has shown us that this hypothesis is a bit naïve.[56] Meertens (1997), in an extensive overview of a large amount of empirical research on preventing prejudice, concludes that the contact hypothesis does not hold true. He contends that it is not because children meet diversity from a very early age that prejudices do not arise. In London, 248 young people aged 15-16 years were interviewed; they were both black and white, and included children from mixed marriages. Nearly all those questioned had peers from various ethnic backgrounds in their classes, and a large number had friends from various ethnic backgrounds (two thirds of the boys and one third of the girls). Nonetheless, it appeared that they still felt uneasy when they found themselves in surroundings in which the majority of people were from a different ethnic background. Even these experiences with diversity could not stop discriminatory behaviour from continuing.

Researcher Ann Phoenix believes that the theory that prejudice is solely caused by ignorance and a lack of contact is erroneous (Phoenix, 1992).[57] She argues that simply because children are in the same group does not automatically mean they have close contact. This can be seen in the international schools in Brussels – where in the main, the culturally diverse children come from similar socio-economic backgrounds – where parents of the primary school children say that they are disillusioned with how little their children play with those of other nationalities.

After conducting a large-scale research review, Meertens (1997) put forward a number of reasons why the contact-hypothesis does not hold true, and he sketches a number of essential conditions that must be filled in order to learn to deal positively with diversity. His findings are described below, and are augmented by our own professional experiences primarily in the MEO project, which involved teachers at daycare centres.[58] One or two Turkish-Belgian or Moroccan-Belgian teachers were added to each of the 25 teams at these daycare centres, and these teams were monitored and counselled for a period of two years. In the beginning, the project met with a great deal of resistance which, in most cases, settled into productive cooperation. While the explanations here deal with adults and educators rather than with children, they do appear to be relevant. In the first place, it is essential for educators who work with increasing self-awareness and kindredship in children, to look at themselves first. Secondly,

we assume here that prejudice in adults is often much more difficult to eradicate than in children. In the MEQ project, we saw that many of the educators evolved positive views of people from ethnic minorities. Meerten's analysis (1997) gives some explanations for this positive evolution.

Equal status

Meertens postulates that in order for contact to have a positive effect, the first condition is that the members of the various groups have the same status. Unequal status leads to superior behaviour by the group with a greater degree of resentment towards the others and will have the opposite effect. With this in mind, in the MEQ project, everything was done to give people from ethnic minorities a full place in the team. The fact that their diplomas were certainly equivalent played a major role in the acceptance of the colleagues from ethnic minorities. In a few teams this did not work initially and the colleagues from ethnic minorities were treated as 'interns' instead of 'colleagues'. The diplomas that the ethnic minority teachers had were, in reality, felt to be higher than the ones that the native childcare teachers had, and this caused a good deal of resistance and resentment.

This situation is extremely difficult as we cannot control social injustice. If I meet a family in an institution and I speak my native language, but the parents speak what is for them a second language, then I have the power. This power increases inversely in relation to the position that the language of the parents occupies in the socio-economic hierarchy. Simply being in the position of 'the person responsible' or the 'experienced educator' puts educators in a position of power over the parents that we meet. This led Swedish researcher Lisbeth Flising to conclude that parents at parent-teacher meetings generally do not express their own opinions, but are more inclined to say what they think the professional would like to hear (Flising, 1992).

Such social power differences can affect the relationships that children have with each other and, therefore, the views that they have about each other. For example, in a care institution where there is only one child who is different to the others, the inequality in status is more noticeable and that child usually gets labelled. Research has shown that the unequal opportunities for the first generation of 'guest labourers' coming to Belgium can be blamed on the fact

that this group in general is less educated. The continuing inequality for the second generation is, however, 'made in Belgium', as Swyngedouw *et al* (1999) have determined.[59] They argue that the degree to which immigrant groups are accepted into society is directly connected to their 'positions' in the social hierarchy. By this, they mean the position of the 'minority group' in the eyes of the 'dominant group'.[60] Turks and Moroccans in Belgium, for example, have a low social status and a great cultural distance. This group will therefore, have a higher chance of being victims of what is called *prevailing prejudice.*

This is one of the reasons why representatives of some minority groups have resorted to creating separate services (Mistry, 1994).[61] While this is not desirable, it highlights the fact that awareness of social inequality needs to increase. As educators, we cannot always change inequality, and this subject is often taboo among educators. We would be only too happy to believe that we can get rid of prejudices and we have the tendency to see this wish as reality.

Common goals

Contact between people can only be positive if they work together to realise common goals, not if the groups strive for different goals. Cooperation within a team is a common goal within itself. When counselling the teams in the MEQ project, specific goals were put into writing and were supported by the entire team. It was strikingly obvious that when the common goals were clearly supported by the leadership of each team, there was much more cooperation than when the leadership adopted an ambivalent or vague attitude. Cooperation in working towards common goals meant that the, sometimes unconscious, division of the children into various categories (for example, boys/girls or black/white) was more easily breached. Meertens (1997) calls this the 'de-categorisation' or the 're-categorisation' of groups.[62] In his well-known book for toddlers, 'De Vreemdeling' ('The Stranger'), Max Velthuijs (1993) illustrates the importance of common goals. When Rat (the stranger) comes to town, all the animals are very sceptical at first. Pig accuses Rat of all sorts of nasty things, like stealing wood. This scepticism lasts until Pig's house catches fire and all the animals, including Rat, work together to achieve the common goal of putting the fire out.

However, Harris (1998) has already pointed out that nothing can counteract xenophobia – the fear of foreigners – as the creation of a communal enemy. This

98

was made abundantly clear a few years ago in Flanders. Seldom was public opinion so much in favour of voting rights for immigrants as after the death and emotional funeral of Loubna Benaïssa, a Moroccan-Belgian girl who was murdered during the period in which the Dutroux debate was on everyone's lips.[63] Dutroux, the public enemy, brought about unprecedented solidarity between Moroccans and native Belgians, and crossed all language barriers.

Refuting stereotypes

People tend to notice behaviour that confirms their stereotypical views and to see other behaviour as an 'exception'. For example, in one of the MEQ teams, the Dutch teachers had the stereotypical view that 'immigrants' are casual about time and are not punctual. A colleague from an ethnic minority shows up late for work a couple of times. This is seen as a lack of a 'proper work ethic', and confirms the view that 'immigrants' are not punctual. There is a risk that, if this is the commonly held view of the team, management will react to punctuality differently, so that the colleagues from ethnic minorities will have fewer chances to adapt their work ethic to prevailing norms. Thus, having workers of different backgrounds can actually affirm prejudices. It is therefore important to pay particular attention to refuting stereotypes in these situations.

We have also seen that, in teams that added two co-workers from ethnic minorities, fewer stereotypes emerged than in those where there was only one. Variety may help to negate prejudice. If the co-worker for example, was the only Turkish Belgian the others knew, they would be more inclined to attribute all her 'idiosyncrasies' or 'peculiarities' to her ethnic origin. If there were two co-workers from ethnic minorities in the team, the other team members would see the differences between the two which would provide them with a much more subtly shaded image. The same mechanism of the confirmation of stereotypes instead of the refutation of them, also occurs when the first man enters a team made up entirely of women.

Educators and other adults should be extremely alert to this. Children explore the world and generalise their experiences, and this includes forming stereotypes. Contact with a child from another culture will not in itself break a stereotypical view per se. To do this, adults should react explicitly to each expression of stereotyping. This does not have to be an admonishment, but can be done through questioning the view and bringing children from unconscious

to conscious thinking on the subject. This step is what American psychologist Bruner (1996) calls 'going meta'[64], and will be discussed later in the chapter. Creating a safe environment in which to do this is imperative. If possible, educators should take care that the institution (or the family) provides sufficient security and stimulus for the children to be able to experience the intimacy in their self-selected, spontaneous play. In the MEQ project, a direct connection between the attitude of the leadership and the prevention of stereotyping and discrimination was observed.

Intimacy

To break down group boundaries, the contact between groups must be intense enough for there to be an exchange of individual information and feelings. This means that the exchange goes further than is deemed professionally necessary. Working together with children offers many opportunities for this, and the atmosphere in most daycare centres is such that it is normal to exchange all sorts of personal news. In the MEQ project, after the two year period, many co-workers became good colleagues, and some of them even became friends who saw each other in their free time. In parallel, there was also a great deal of solidarity between the ethnic minority co-worker and the team, and much empathy with the stress that she had in studying for her diploma.

Norms and values to stimulate equality

The final condition that Meertens (1997) outlined concerns group norms. It is important that contact takes place in a social setting where the key figures and the authority figures support the objectives of the contact. In the MEQ project, this was not the case in a few situations, and we could indeed clearly see the point that Meertens was making. Every community has key figures who represent authority; in a daycare centre, this is normally the director, and most centres have rules and regulations. In the teams where there was discriminating behaviour but which had non-discrimination rules, the directors systematically acted to reduce the discrimination. The teams' positive thinking on issues of discrimination appeared to evolve much more quickly than in those centres which had no rules and where the director was more inclined to stay in the background. Educators should always practice a policy of equality towards children. Explicit rules dealing with respecting each other's integrity must be made clear, in a manner appropriate to age, and must be supported by the director.

100

It is striking that the parents of the Brussels international schools mentioned earlier in the chapter stated that the lack of interaction between the children of various nationalities completely changed when the children were older and could choose for themselves how they wanted to spend their free time. In group activities, like a swimming team, a few factors described by Meertens (1997) are present. These factors are that the children choose the groups themselves; the children have equal status in the group; there is a strong communal goal; there is an emotional connection with that goal and, therefore, a certain intimacy. These are examples of 're-categorisation.'

Re-examining the contact hypothesis

In the last chapter, various factors that influence the development of prejudice were explained, and we looked at the extent to which the *contact hypothesis* is valid. Early and intimate contact with children and adults of other groups will, perhaps, soften the fear factor, and it becomes possible to talk about diversity. Talking about diversity is not easy, and most adults have a great deal of trouble with the outspokenness of children – as I did when my two year old son saw a black man for the first time in the supermarket and to my enormous embarrassment called out, 'That man looks just like a gorilla'. All too often, we urge children not to notice differences, or to pretend that they don't exist. We ask them to ignore their natural curiosity. Unfortunately, in this way we lose many opportunities to teach children to deal with the diversity around them to our advantage. Children who become used to dealing with others will be less frightened and will be able, from the beginning, to adapt their mental images of others when they actually meet them. In part, children bring *prevailing prejudices* with them into the classroom and community. Aboud's literature review shows that prejudices are more likely to increase than decrease in groups where there is a small number (for example, 10 percent) of ethnic minorities. It is only in groups that have a 50-50 ratio where one begins to see positive effects (Aboud, 1988).

This is why the various factors outlined by Meertens (1997) are also essential, even though we adults cannot control them all. For Meertens, the overriding factor is equality in status, even though it is mainly socially determined, and a childcare institution cannot make an abstraction of the 'power' factor and the power struggles in society.

Going meta

Does this conclusion mean that educators' commitment should stop because the social structures are unchangeable? Indeed, while Bruner (1996) states that we cannot prevent the influencing of our views by social structures, we certainly can try to become as conscious of it as possible. This means that we should try to gain an insight into how we think about others and why we think this way. For Bruner and others, this skill is essential for raising and educating children for the 21st century, and he calls this *going meta*.

The image that we gradually create of the other is coloured and limited by our own frame of reference, and this we cannot avoid. However, as we become more conscious of this, we become less subject to the patterns of our own frame of reference. *Going meta* means learning to think about thinking and there is no doubt that it must become the essential principle for education. Moreover, the pedagogy of reciprocity is the recognition and acknowledgement of other views and beliefs, even though one does not have to agree with them. We must teach children that other ideas can lead to opposing views – this is one of the cornerstones in dealing with diversity in young children (Bruner, 1996), and forms the basis for negotiation among adults, mentioned earlier. (This will be discussed more in depth in Chapter Seven). For children, this means that we have to be extremely alert to early stereotypes or pre-prejudices and deal with them directly – not to correct children, but to make them conscious of how they are thinking.

To give an example, in a Brussels daycare centre, Karin (the teacher) brings out a bread basket with dozens of different kinds of bread. Dyvia, a child of Indian origin, takes a *chapatti* and tosses it back and forth between her hands, as is done when preparing *chapattis*. Elke, another child, takes the *chapatti* away and with a brusque 'no', puts it back in the basket. Dyvia takes the chapatti again, repeats the action, and again, Elke takes the *chapatti* away. This time, Elke looks at her angrily in order to make it clear to Dyvia that she shouldn't play with bread like that. Karin then intervenes. She says to Elke, 'You think that you should not play with bread like that, do you? You don't play with bread like that at home. What kind of bread do you usually eat at home?' Elke takes a roll. Karin continues: 'At Dyvia's house they often eat this kind of bread. They are called *chapattis* and you make them like this. At your house, you don't do it like

102

that, but at Dyvia's house that's normal.' This anecdote was also the impetus for Karin to ask Dyvia's mother to come to school to make *chapattis* with the children, an activity which Elke enjoyed. Karin's intervention is an example of 'going meta'. She did not reprimand Elke; she made her think about why she thought it was wrong to handle bread. By explicitly confronting her with the difference in customs at home, she showed Elke that other views exist and she also showed both Elke and Dyvia that this is good. In this situation, both Elke and Dyvia learn that the same principle – in this case, the principle of 'good manners' can lead to different practices.

By exposing children to various forms of diversity, children gradually learn that there are different views on what is considered 'polite', 'delicious', 'tough', and so on. They learn that they can have different views and still understand each other. They learn that different views are based on reasonable arguments and this is, according to Bruner (1996), one of the most essential goals in education. This means that, in practice, it is desirable to look for those activities that emphasise diversity in order to stimulate 'meta-thinking'; and that the differences and similarities in these activities will be looked for and discussed. In this way, we can confront children with simple *antinomies*.[65] Thinking is, after all, a kind of internal dialogue and it is good, every once in a while, to speak the internal dialogue out loud through activities and interactions with adults. It is essential that children learn to verbalise their experiences and that adults help them find the right words to fit their experiences. This is the only way that they can make these experiences truly theirs.

The final chapter of this book, 'The small world', gives a number of practical activities to deal with diversity within educational institutions. It also gives some classic suggestions and recommendations from the field of multicultural education. The educator can use concrete examples of diversity within the institution in order to go meta with the children. The family wall (see Chapter Nine, 'The small world'), for example, is extremely suitable for breaking through stereotypes surrounding the family and to stimulate thinking about thinking in connection with the family structure.

Racism by omission

It is important that people be aware of the social inequality that might arise in institutions and not to introduce social inequality from society into the learning

103

environment. The learning environment is a mini-society and must provide children with a message about how adults think about the world.

To quote an example, an Irish Traveller[66] preschool child came home excited and told his mother, 'I was at school today!' The mother replied that, of course, she knew that. The boy, however, kept insisting and saying, 'No, I was really at school!' The next day, the mother mentions this to the kindergarten teacher. The teacher explained to her that the day before she had given the children a new puzzle, which had a picture of a Traveller community with its trailers.[67] What we learn from this is that this boy only felt 'acknowledged' at school when he recognised himself in an illustration. We also learn that the school had been unwittingly passing on a message about Travellers by not having any pictures of them. Generally called *racism by omission*, this means that when all the symbols in the family, the community or the institution come from one single reference group, this gives the message – intentionally or not – that the world is supposed to be a uniform place and that there is only one way to be.

The idea of racism by omission applies equally to other forms of diversity. For example, the prevailing idea in a society might be that a family consists of a man and a woman who live together with their biological children. Even though we know that this is not the case for a good number of toddlers and for an even larger group of school children, it still unconsciously remains 'the norm'. If families continue to be introduced like this (as in books, stories, on special days such as Mother's Day, and so on), this sends the children of single mothers or fathers, or of homosexual parents, a message, either consciously or unconsciously. Equally, what kind of message does a child of Indian origin receive if he or she wants to cook in the play corner but can't find any of the cooking utensils that are at home? While the unintentional effect is not fair to these children, it also short-changes all of the children. (For more discussion, see Chapter Nine.)

Diversity is ubiquitous in most groups of children and provides the perfect opportunity to realise educational goals. Even if there is no ethnic diversity, we still find differences in culture, language, family structure, body shape, and socio-economic circumstances. In short, all kinds of differences that can be used to help develop social skills, and fulfil the objectives that Meertens (1997) listed: communal goals, intimacy, refuting stereotypes. One essential aspect here is the

104

degree to which adults create a clear framework by systematically dealing with children when they engage in offensive utterances or discriminating behaviour. As shown in the MEQ project, the explicit attitude of directors determines the atmosphere in the team to a great extent; equally, the explicit attitude that adult teachers have towards diversity determines the atmosphere among the children. The socialising task of the school or childcare institution does not lie in copying social inequality, but in helping children not to become victims of it. This is done partly by the subtle messages that the school or childcare centre itself sends, and partly by the explicit manner in which they deal with children and help them to think about their thinking. This can only be possible by giving solidarity and kindredship the attention that they deserve: emphasising the similarities and, by helping children to deal with inequality, emphasising differences.

Colour blindness

It is clear that all of this demands a great deal from the adults. Our experience has shown us that our work with educators on this meets a great deal of resistance in the beginning. It is a deeply anchored conviction in educational circles that we must 'treat everyone equally'. An approach that specifically places the differences in the spotlight seems, therefore, strange, and raises the question of whether or not it would be better to emphasise the ways that we are alike. Derman-Sparks & the ABC Task Force's (1989) answer to this is that it is not the differences in themselves that cause the problems, but rather the way we deal with those differences. In order to address this, it will also be necessary to recognise and acknowledge diversity.

The behaviour of educators who do not take diversity into account, or not sufficiently, is called 'colour-blind' (Derman-Sparks & the ABC Task Force, 1989). It needs to be stressed that an education in diversity should emphasise not only the differences but also the similarities. This is equally important. If this book seems to talk more about dealing with differences, it is simply because, in practice, this is what still evokes the most resistance. A survey in 1994 of mixed families by the Early Years Trainers Anti-Racist Network in the UK illustrates what colour blindness can mean. A white mother with a child of colour states:

> ***I used to think, like most other people who have nothing to do with black people, that skin colour didn't matter – inside we are all the same. Now I***

105

> ***know that this is not so. It matters a lot. When you have a black baby, people don't look into the pram to see how lovely your baby is. They look to see what colour the baby is, how dark, what kind of hair the baby has. Sometimes it gets on your nerves. They refer to the child as 'one of them'. (Brown, 1998).***

In our work with educators, at the VBJK we often hear them say such things as *'We want to treat all children the same.' 'For me, all children are equal.'* These are colour blind remarks that score high marks at childcare institutions. They are completely in keeping with the sense of justice of the educator. Nonetheless, it is an illusion that it is possible to treat all children equally. Ample research indicates that educators in Europe unconsciously relate differently to native western children; that they deal with boys differently than with girls; and that they have different expectations of children based on their social backgrounds. For example, a kindergarten teacher during 'sharing time' (when the educator and the children talk about a variety of subjects) about the holiday period, systematically let children from better off socio-economic backgrounds do more talking. Moreover, the more exotic the vacations were, the more interested the teacher seemed to be. Another example is often seen in which a teacher labels a toddler who often plays quietly alone as 'quiet' (with a positive undertone) if it is a girl, but 'still and withdrawn' (with a worried undertone) if it is a boy. Educators are still sometimes worried if they see a four year old boy playing with a doll.

Karen François (1996) cites an impressive number of studies in her literature review which show that, in spite of the ideology of equality, teachers unconsciously treat boys differently from girls. She found that they warn boys more, but also praise them more often. They are more inclined to attribute failure among girls to a lack of ability and among boys to a lack of motivation. Much research has shown that education does produce gender differences, even though it is the explicit intention of the teachers to treat all the children equally. This also applies to the preschool age group. François observed the sharing times in Gent kindergartens, and her observations showed that boys speak significantly more than girls.[68] This difference is explained by their behaviour: they interrupt more often, are less sensitive to authority, are less inclined to wait their turn, and so on. This shows that in fact, it is not possible for kindergarten

106

teachers to treat boys and girls the same way, and that they must be aware of precisely these differences in order to treat boys and girls **equally**. This not only applies to gender differences, but also to other forms of diversity. Research shows, for example, that children from different social classes or various ethnic backgrounds are unequally served by the educational system (MacNaughton & Williams, 1998). This fact alone is a sufficient argument for taking diversity into account.

It is not only an illusion to think that we can treat all children the same, it is also undesirable. Individuality is, after all, an extremely important educational principle both in childcare and at school. Kind en Gezin[69] (Child and Family Institute) describes individuality as follows:

> ***Individuality means activities are developed that are adapted to the age, the phase of development and the nature of the child … Taking the individuality of the child into account is an essential element in education. (Verhegge, 1994)***

Kind en Gezin feels that this principle must also be an essential goal for family daycare providers. In a mission statement that was drawn up by a study group for services provided by family daycare providers and educational centres, it was explicitly stated that family daycare providers should respect the diversity among the children in the families they work for (Kind en Gezin, 1998), and that individual differences be taken into account. Giving each child what he or she needs means precisely that we *do not* treat every child exactly the same. Indeed, the view that everyone should be treated equally does not take actual differences into account, and this can lead to unintentionally discriminating behaviour. Below are a few example of statements or activities that – consciously or unconsciously – can sound offensive.

> ***A childcare centre has an open house every year, which takes place shortly after New Year with a pancake party as the main event. The idea is to be able to relate to the parents informally. Approximately 25 percent of the parents are members of the Muslim community. The daycare centre does not take this into account and plans the pancake party during Ramadan. The effect is, of course, that a great number of parents do not show up.***

107

At a family daycare provider, all the children are making something for Father's Day. One child, of an intentionally unmarried mother asks the daycare provider what he should do, because he doesn't have a father. The question takes the daycare provider by surprise; she does not know what to say and, therefore, gives the child the impression that something is wrong.

A kindergarten class goes to see a play together. One child, whose parents live on the edge of poverty, cannot go along because he doesn't have the money to pay for admission. With the whole class sitting there, the teacher tells the child that he can't go with them because his parents – once again – have not given him the money. Her disapproval is clear from her intonation.

In a daycare centre, there are three toddlers whose parents have requested that they not be given pork. The daycare centre does not offer an alternative.

In each of these examples, all the children are treated 'equally'. There is no question of conscious discrimination. Nonetheless, in every case, the children or the parents are offended, because their own individuality was not taken into account and because the educator did not consciously consider their individuality, or difference.

The problem with colour blindness is that a statement like 'as far as I'm concerned, all children are the same' often in practice comes down to 'all children must be like me'. It is precisely this denial of difference that prevents educators from realising that some children are hardly represented at daycare, at school or in the media (the 'racism by omission,' that was discussed above). Sometimes this denial causes differences to be 'presented' as something exotic and exceptional, without them being a part of daily life.

If one does not pay attention to 'being different', the result can be that the care institution only notices how poorly adapted it is for the disabled, for example, when the first disabled child is registered. The school or institution that does not consciously deal with the diversity in the neighbourhood runs the risk that people from ethnic minorities will not register there, because they feel that the

108

threshold for joining is too high (see Chapter Six). This denial not only does injustice to children, it also denies them the chance to experience the diversity themselves and to learn to deal with it. Not talking about difference does not make it disappear – it makes it taboo. Koen Raes also defends this position from an ethical perspective. Not discussing difference can lead to far reaching 'sanctification'. The unspoken is bestowed with an aura of the unspeakable. That which cannot be said then becomes that which may not be said, leading to a loss of value, rather than to protection (Raes, 1997).

From a very young age, we have been taught to ignore differences and it is therefore understandable that, in practice, diversity is ignored. Children's remarks about people who are different systematically receive negative reactions, with the result that from around the age of five, children have learned to pretend that they do not notice differences among people (Beach, 1998).

Hand in hand with this learnt colour blindness is the belief that all children should be treated the same. Based on the concern that some children would not receive enough attention or that the personal sympathy or antipathy of educators would have too much effect, the illusion is maintained that personal emotions can be ignored and that 'equal' treatment is the same as 'fair' treatment. In the name of equality, we tend to ignore differences. Chiland (in Renard & Guilbert, 1998) argues that people have misused differences to establish inequality; subsequently, the militants for equality deny differences. There certainly are differences, but why should it be less good to have a vagina than a penis, or black skin than white? Even though we realise that treating children 'fairly' actually means treating each child differently, there is still a long way to go before the difference between 'equal' and 'equivalent' is put into practice.[70]

A long journey

According to Phyllis Brady (1996), in the evolution from initial resistance to an education in diversity, the educator often passes through three phases:[71] denial and resistance; confusion and instability; and reconstruction.

The first phase is characterised by denial and resistance. It is the phase dominated by colour blindness. The second phase is, in particular, one of

109

confusion and instability. Educators who are exposed to other views begin to develop a way of looking at their own prejudices and stereotypes that can be extremely confusing. For them, it is as though all their norms and certainties disappear, that there is nothing left to hold on to, and the real meaning of a 'good education' seems to be lost. Former certainties with respect to healthy eating habits, table manners, toilet training, language development, interacting with parents and so on, are suddenly questioned. It is through a confusing, and sometimes conflicting, search that, ultimately in the third phase – the reconstruction phase – a new, stable practice is developed, in which new insights are integrated into the education.

An evolution like this takes time. A number of important questions and objections are suddenly put before initial and on-the-job training for educators and directors. In our experience, short on-the-job training courses and limited initial training for educators (as is common for family daycare providers) can have only a limited effect: only a few basic techniques or ways of dealing with the first confrontation with new visions or ideas can be learned. Changing attitudes or shifting values demand a long-lasting, intensive approach. This is only possible in longer basic training sessions or through years of intensive counselling. This is one of the reasons why some countries have developed comprehensive educational packages for family daycare providers (for example, Jones, 1997; Khoshkhesal, 1998). It is only in intensive counselling and long term training that there is the time and the opportunity to work on the awareness of one's own multiple identity and the role that it plays in how one deals with others. Overcoming resistance is essential in order to give children an education that teaches them to deal with diversity. But it is, nonetheless, a time consuming and intensive process.

These ideas are manifest in a programme for trainers in dealing with diversity developed by Gaine and van Keulen (1997). Their approach, geared towards those training for childcare positions, comprise five steps. The first is to determine how the inflow of students can already contain barriers to certain groups and unwittingly exclude certain minorities from participating in the educational process. In the second step, attention is focused upon the content of the knowledge to be passed on. This includes knowledge of one's own history and of the other çultures present; and information about the social aspects of

discrimination. The third step concerns skills to be studied: questioning oneself; being alert to discriminatory behaviour; standing up for yourself; and communication skills. The fourth step deals with desirable attitudes such as 'empathy' – being open to feelings and feeling good about your own cultural identity. The fifth and last step deals with student evaluation. From the overview provided by Gaine and van Keulen themselves, this programme is a long way from creating the perfect child carers, but is, absolutely essential in all basic training for those who will soon be working with young children.[72]

Apart from working with children, an approach like this can also be included in training programmes for social workers or kindergarten teachers. While it is a positive step that many training courses include a module on 'intercultural work', in nearly all European countries the basic training for family daycare providers is so short that there is no room to actually work on this. This means that a huge responsibility is put on the shoulders of the family daycare providers to achieve these goals through counselling and training. Training kits that have been specifically designed for family daycare providers also emphasise becoming conscious of one's own culture and views on parenting before one can become receptive to others. This needs sufficient time (Jones, 1997; Khoshkhesal, 1998). Furthermore, continued practical support by the management remains an essential condition for realising these difficult educational goals in daycare centres and kindergartens as well as at agencies responsible for daycare providers.

Notes

52. ACEPP is the Association des Collectifs Enfants, Parents et Professionels, the French Federation of Daycare Centres, whose *crèches parentales* are run by parents who largely determine the daily routines and who are heavily involved in the management and organisational affairs. ACEPP has a long history in setting up small sites for childcare in underprivileged neighbourhoods.

53. Donald W. Winnicott (1896-1971) was a paediatrician and, together with Melanie Klein, a prominent psychoanalyst in the Anglo-Saxon tradition (in contrast to the Viennese tradition). The mother-child relationship (and the concept 'good enough mother') is one of the central themes in his work, as is the concept 'transitional object'.

54. This is not only about the socialisation of children. It is also about, for example, the fact that ACEPP's experience has shown that the *crèche parentales* also have a socialising effect on parents. For some mothers, this tolerant microcosm that is the childcare centre is the first opportunity they have to come into contact with situations that are different from theirs (Combes, 1990).

55. The intense involvement of parents appeared primarily to result in increasingly complex interactions in which children from 'underprivileged families' seemed to profit the most. Moreover, the children themselves seemed to create more complex interactions.

56. As early as 1949, in his essay 'The world as I see it' (originally published in *Forum and Century*, vol. 84, pp. 193-194, the thirteenth in the Forum series Living Philosophies), Albert Einstein talked about how difficult it is to alter prejudices: 'We live in sad times: it is easier to shatter an atom than a prejudice.'

57. Ann Phoenix is a member of the Department of Human Sciences at Brunel University (Middlesex, UK) and has carried out research supported by the Thomas Coram Research Unit of the Institute of Education, London University.

58. MEQ stands for Milestones towards Quality through Equality, a project in which the VBJK was participating with partners from France, Great Britain and Ireland. In Flanders, 30 immigrant women from ethnic minorities were trained as childcare

112

co-workers and given jobs in 25 childcare centres. These women were coached by the Begeleidingscel Werkgelegenheid Migranten (BWM – the Immigrant Employment Guidance Centre). The teams in the daycare centres were counselled by the VBJK. For an extensive description of the project, see Peeters (1998).

59. Marc Swyngedouw is Professor of Sociology and Political Science at the Catholic University in Brussels, Belgium; Karen Phalet is Professor of Cross-cultural Psychology at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands.

60. Swyngedouw *et al* (1999) use a nice definition of the terms 'minority group' and 'majority group':

> *'Just as a language is sometimes defined as a dialect supported by an army, you could jokingly say that a national culture is like a minority culture, but then supported by the State. The dominant national culture differentiates itself from ethnic or other minority cultures because it has the "central cultural organ" at its disposal. The cultural organ consists of cultural institutions such as education, art, science and media ... and, thus, monitors the entry into an official "high culture".' (Hannerz in Swyngedouw et al, 1999).*

61. Kirit Mistry is the coordinator of a centre for out-of-school care for South Asian girls in Leicestershire, England. He makes a case for separate services for a number of reasons, among which is the fact that South Asian girls are often the victims of racism in mixed care institutions, and also that the parents of these children want separate services. In his experience, parents of South Asian minority children are hardly listened to in the other centres. This argument reappears in some groups who plead for partially segregated education for girls, in order to give them sufficient opportunities particularly in the so-called 'tough subjects'.

62. This is, of course, an important argument against separate services for minorities, which was discussed above.

63. Dutroux is a man who was arrested for the kidnapping, sexual abuse and murder of several young girls in Belgium a few years ago.

64. Meta-thinking is thinking about thinking. Meta-knowledge is knowledge about the way in which we acquire knowledge.

65. Two truths that are each others' opposites, such as 'playing with bread is not polite' and 'playing with bread is not impolite'. Antinomies are very good examples for stimulating thinking, according to Bruner, but they are also exercises in empathy.

66. Travellers are nomads in Ireland. Like gypsies, they often live in trailer camps but while they have their own culture they are not ethnically different from the Irish (whom they call 'the Settled').

67. This example comes from a document by the Irish Traveller organisation, Pavee Point in Vandenbroeck, Michel (Ed.) (1998a), 'Respect for diversity in early childhood care and education'. (CD-Rom). Ghent: MEQ.

68. Karen François carried out this research for her degree in Women's Studies, University of Antwerp, Belgium.

69. The Flemish government institute which is authorised to oversee the quality of daycare.

70. Gisèle Halimi has placed the origin of this erroneous ideology of equality in the ideals of the 18th and 19th centuries, when the 'Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen' (Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen) were formulated in France. In the spirit of the Enlightenment, the ideals of equality were supported, in which one single image of mankind was paramount: that of the Western European man. What this universalism led to, is apparent from the period of colonisation that followed (Halimi, 1999).

71. Phyllis Brady is the trainer of the 'Leadership-in-Diversity' project that is taking place via the California Association for the Education of Young Children. She also works with Louise Derman-Sparks.

72 The five steps are extensively described and documented with didactic examples in a brochure that is available in Dutch, English, Spanish, and French (Gaine & van Keulen, 1997). The brochure is a co-operative effort between the Dutch organisation MUTANT and the British organisation EYTARN and is based on the work of Louise Derman-Sparks. This will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

Chapter five

Two sides of the ocean

In the previous chapters, some of the features which will help determine suitable childrearing and education in the 21st century were discussed. These features are based on a changing social context and on insights taken from developmental psychology over the last decades. If we make a list of all the changes in childrearing and education that must be taken into account, then it almost seems like crossing an ocean. It is useful to interpret them in terms of an educational philosophy.

A clear educational philosophy is essential in order to create a frame of reference for all parties. In the first instance, these parties are the educators at childcare centres and kindergartens, and they are also the trainers of these professionals. The European Commission Network on Child-Care argues that a clear – and clearly written – educational model is necessary in order to offer young children the quality care that they need.[73] (In Chapter Seven, it will be explained why an educational philosophy should be preceded by a social philosophy.)

At this point, it should again be mentioned that developing one's identity is the core of the entire educational and developmental process (discussed in detail in Chapter Two). Our identities continue to develop in everything we do – the way we experience things, our history and philosophy. An education that aims to prepare children for the 21st century requires an educational philosophy in which the development of identity and interpersonal relationships is paramount. It is, therefore, not about adding a new educational goal, but about changing the very core of education itself to mesh with our new society.

When practices in Western Europe are examined, it is striking that various institutions for childcare use very different terminology such as 'intercultural education', 'multicultural education' and 'education without prejudice'. This

became apparent, for example, from a study by Paul Vedder (an external mentor of the MEQ project in Flanders), Els Bouwer and Trees Pels (1996). Their study describes four models that provide an interesting view of intercultural daycare practice and make it possible to map out diversity, and will be discussed later in this chapter (see Peeters, 1998).

A second educational model to be examined is one that originated from the other side of the Atlantic: the 'anti-bias curriculum'. This model includes the work of researchers like Stonehouse (1991) in Australia and Brown (1998) in Great Britain. The point of departure for these authors is the work of Derman-Sparks in the United States. Her work has had a great influence on Europeans, through the work of various European organisations united in the DECET network (Diversity in Early Childhood Education and Training). Therefore, her work will be used as the guideline throughout this chapter: in our experience at VBJK with counselling experimental groups in daycare centres, the work of Derman-Sparks has continually been an important source of inspiration.

A quick look at these European and American points of view – in combination with the previous chapters – will allow readers to establish a framework for instilling in children a spirit of self-awareness and kindredship. This chapter concludes with further advice for those who intend to set up such a practice.

Intercultural work

An extensive study, commissioned by the Bernard van Leer Foundation, was conducted at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands during the first half of the 1990s on intercultural childcare practices. Using a telephone questionnaire and on-site visits, the researchers catalogued intercultural work in the Netherlands. They also looked at childcare centres in England, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, Germany, Spain and France (Bouwer & Vedder, 1995; Vedder & Pels, 1996). It became apparent from this study that the practice could be described in four models: the adjustment model; the transitional model; the contact model; and the cultural change model – or a combination of these models.

The adjustment model

In this model, the assumption is that children from ethnic minorities must learn the dominant language and culture as soon as possible. In the teaching, no

117

particular attention is paid to their cultural backgrounds. The emphasis is primarily on presenting the dominant culture with the ultimate goal of 'getting children adjusted'. No attention is given to multicultural play materials, nor specific efforts made to recruit ethnic minority personnel. Extra explanation about the dominant culture might be provided for the ethnic minority parents. The argument in support of this approach is that the children must learn to live in the dominant culture and have to learn to deal with the dominant education system. It is evident that the lack of attention to various cultural backgrounds will hamper relationships with the parents, which, in turn, may significantly handicap their children's adjustment. Furthermore, this model assumes that society is monocultural. The abridged application of this model, therefore, according to Bouwer and Vedder (1995), can hardly be labelled 'intercultural'.

The transitional model

The second model has the same goal, but tries to ease the transition from the home culture to the dominant culture for children from ethnic minorities. This is done by taking the language and home culture into account. When educators show an interest in materials that reflect the children's respective cultural backgrounds, the ultimate goal is still adjustment to the dominant culture. Offering a feeling of security to each child is an important concern, and therefore educators from ethnic minorities are recruited for groups of children from those minorities.

One drawback of this model, according to Bouwer and Vedder, is that it can promote division between children from ethnic minorities and those from the dominant culture by developing separate programmes for each. It can lead to stereotypical views with little interest in the changes and diversity that exist within each group. It is a model that often assumes static, one dimensional views of identity for children from ethnic minorities as well as from the dominant culture. We often see that the term 'multicultural' is used to advance a model in which various cultures are set next to each other, without an eye to society as a whole or for mutual influence.

The contact model

The third model focuses less on the adjustment of ethnic minorities, and more on promoting contact between children and people from various cultures.

Children from different cultures must learn to get along with each other, to accept and respect each other. The goal is to teach children to be proud of their own cultures and to prevent prejudice and discrimination. There is, therefore, a preference for mixed groups of children and much attention is paid to activities that promote respect. Adults are role models, and as such, should take a critical view of their own prejudices. The same attitude governs the relationship with parents, in which significance is attached to the exchange of ideas and the contact among parents from various cultures. In this model, the researchers find that the educators often think that simply by bringing children from different ethnic groups together, the prejudices will disappear by themselves, so that the educator's own attitude and actions are hardly questioned at all. Unfortunately, in Chapter Four it was shown that this hope is often unfounded.

The cultural change model

Lastly, the fourth model also argues that it is not desirable simply to have the ethnic minorities do the adjusting. Every culture has its own achievements. Based on this model, an attempt is made to take from each culture that which will benefit all of the children the most. Thus, a new cultural mix originates in which elements from various cultures can be found. Getting along with each other is important for all children and that is why children from ethnic minorities, as well as staff from various cultures, are actively recruited. Multilingualism is an asset, as is the contribution of parents from various cultures. Often this model is referred to as 'intercultural', as opposed to 'multicultural'.

The researchers, however, question whether combining the best elements from different cultures is actually possible in the short term. Their criticism is that this model does not take into account the existing social inequality among various groups. It does, indeed, seem utopian not to consider this and to hide behind the discourse of the 'cultural mosaic' as a misleading metaphor for multicultural society. This discourse bypasses the unequal balance of power between a dominant national culture and multiple, sometimes overlapping, minority cultures, such as the blue-collar culture or ethnic cultures (Swyngedouw et al, 1999). A critical look at this model of cultural contact shows that it denies the actual existence of a dominant culture. This model is based on the assumption of harmonious relationships within society and within its institutions (Willems & Cottaar, 1991).

From the analysis by Vedder and others, it therefore appears that a number of very different practices can be found all using the same terminology. It also appears that these practices are based on completely different models. Each of the models has stronger and weaker aspects, with the exception of the first model that actually does not belong under the heading 'dealing with diversity'. All the same, in contrast to the authors, the models, in my view, are not of equal value. I will return to this at the end of the chapter, but let us first look at a model from the anti-bias perspective.

The Anti-Bias Curriculum

Around the end of the 1960s, the Civil Rights Movement started developing in the United States which promoted – among other things – equal rights for women and minorities. This movement paid a great deal of attention to childrearing and education, for adults as well as children.[74] There was increasing criticism among the political left and feminists about the ways childrearing practices reproduced existing social inequalities. Many African-American developmental psychologists, educators and activists were increasingly critical of the attack on childrearing practices within the African-American community and other ethnic minority communities as being 'culturally deprived'. Their work focused on accurately describing childrearing practices; the historical, social and cultural contexts in which they developed; and their strengths in enabling African-American children to survive and thrive in the face of daily systemic and individual racism.

One of the activists in the Civil Rights Movement, Louise Derman-Sparks, is a leading authority on childrearing and educating very young children on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. She continues to be involved in the activist movement, and has been affiliated with Pacific Oaks College in Pasadena, California, for the past 35 years. As the white mother of two adopted black children, she realised very early that her own training in developmental psychology did not prepare her for raising children belonging to an 'ethnic minority'. It is on this subject that her activist convictions, her personal experience as a mother, and her professional career as a developmental psychologist all came together and created the impetus for years of pioneering work in the field of childrearing without prejudice.[75]

Some of Derman-Sparks' works are given in the Bibliography, and all are based on the experiences of the ABC Task Force, a group of educators of young children who have developed a fascinating mode of practice. The best-known publication is 'Anti-Bias Curriculum. Tools for Empowering Young Children', which was first published in 1989. By now, tens of thousands of copies have been distributed. Through cooperation with such organisations as the Bernard van Leer Foundation and MUTANT in the Netherlands, EYTARN in the UK, Pavee Point in Ireland, VBJK in Belgium, and the European MEQ project, her work has also become well-known in Europe.[76] Recently, a network was established with these organisations and others in Europe on the theme 'diversity in education for childcare centres.'[77]

The basis for the anti-bias curriculum model is determined by the evidence that children from the age of two start to notice differences. The first ones they notice are gender and skin colour, and later they see other differences, including cultural ones. Derman-Sparks argues that at around three years old, children connect these differences to early prejudices (*pre-prejudices*) which come from the adults around them. and from other areas in society such as media, peers, children's literature and films, and even daily artefacts such as T-shirts, lunch boxes and greeting cards. Children are influenced by current social views on, for example, women or people of colour. Between the ages of three and five, children create a consistent self-image and gradually discover which aspects of themselves are changeable and which are constant. It can be clearly seen that, starting at four to five years of age, children use racial arguments not to play with certain children or that they discriminate using sexist stereotyping. 'The degree to which four olds have already internalised stereotypic gender roles, racial bias and fear of the differently abled forcefully points out the need for anti-bias education with young children,' argues Derman-Sparks & the ABC Task Force (1989) in chapter one of the book.

Furthermore, she supports the assessment (discussed in the previous chapter) that the contact hypothesis does not work: simply bringing different groups together is not sufficient to fight prejudice. Fighting prejudice depends on the *prevailing societal norms* or *prejudices*, which influence the children. These norms have everything to do with the fact that privileges are not equally divided, and that these inequalities are – consciously or unconsciously –

121

maintained by these prejudices. A strength of the anti-bias curriculum educational model is that it takes into account the social environment in which childrearing and education take place. Moreover, it also takes into account that social hierarchy plays a major role in the development of prejudice.

This is precisely why it is important, according to Derman-Sparks & the ABC Task Force (1989), that children of colour develop an extended self-identity that contains an individual identity as well as a strong group identity or orientation. This means a sense of pride in belonging to a group of, for example, African American, Hispanics or Asian Americans. It does not mean, as some may think, believing that your group is superior to all others. Children of colour need a strong sense of connection to their larger group to be able to deal with the attack against their identity from the racism that will, undoubtedly, come their way. Racism, however, also presents developmental tasks for children from the dominant European or European-American cultures. They run the risk of absorbing the core message of racism that they are superior simply because they are 'white'. The accompanying message of the inferiority of other groups leads to ignorance and fear which prevents them from feeling comfortable in large groups of 'others'.

For these reasons, a specific, well-considered approach was developed, which has become known as the Anti-Bias Curriculum[78]. 'Anti-bias' refers to the fact that everyone has prejudices, and that all children internalise the prevailing societal prejudices from a very early age. It further argues that there is no such thing as an 'unprejudiced' educator; rather, all educators (and all adults) must actively combat their own prejudices as well as those in the care and educational institutions in which they work. The term is, therefore, closely connected to the term 'anti-racist'. The Anti-Bias Curriculum, therefore, unites elements of developmental psychology (in connection with identity development) and social elements (the fight for equal rights).

It is, however, important to differentiate between an anti-bias curriculum and a multicultural approach. A multicultural approach to education often degenerates into a 'tourist' approach, in which the dominant culture is the norm and 'folkloric' visits are made now and then to other cultures. A multicultural approach is geared towards cultural differences, while an anti-bias approach

explicitly deals with all forms of diversity. Another difference is that an anti-bias curriculum is based on developmental stimulation (for example, with respect to identity) as well as stereotypes and discrimination, and not solely on the differences between cultures. In this sense, an anti-bias curriculum takes into account the *power* factor that permeates society. It assumes that the environment of children is influenced by aspects of power and certainly by those that contribute to maintaining the unequal distribution of privileges. An anti-bias curriculum questions inequality and can, therefore, only be socially critical, and hence discordant. This is not necessary for a multicultural programme per se, which has the central premise of joining various cultures without attacking unequal cultural hierarchies.

The Anti-Bias Curriculum is summarised by Derman-Sparks in four clear objectives. A study group of experts from various European countries worked on these objectives and they were also later developed by Gaine & van Keulen (1997) into a set of skills for personnel and training. At the end of 1998, a large group of experts from 10 European countries met in Ghent and agreed to accept these four objectives as important to their work.[79]

The objectives are as follows.

1. Nurture each child's construction of a knowledgeable, confident self-image and group identity. This identity-objective begins at a very early age and refers explicitly to the significant groups the child belongs to. In order to achieve these objectives, childcare centres should make sure that:[80]

    - the lives of all children and their families are reflected in the educational institution;
    - the personnel or the family daycare providers come from diverse cultural and ethnic groups;
    - a close connection is created between personnel and parents;[81]
    - the personnel pays attention to the differences in learning styles and aspects of care;

- **the mother tongue of each child is supported and developed;**
- **the personnel learns to think critically and to combat prejudice.**

2. Promote each child's comfortable, empathetic interaction with people from various backgrounds. It is important to work on the image that children form of others, starting at 18 months to two years, in order to combat prejudice. This is done by stimulating empathy and negotiating skills. In order to do this, it is important that the personnel makes sure that:

   - **children from the dominant groups are equal partners and do not dominate the group;**
   - **children learn that differences have merit and that bullying is wrong;**
   - **children are helped to bridge the gap between learning about themselves and learning about others;**
   - **the themes of diversity and anti-racism are integrated, using correct and authentic images, into all aspects of daily life;**
   - **misunderstandings, stereotyping and prejudices demonstrated by children are handled immediately.**

3. Foster each child's critical thinking about bias. Around the age of four or five, children can easily tell the difference between what is right and what is not. They themselves discover stereotyping and offensive statements or images. They can learn to perceive how others are hurt by these statements and images. Gradually, they learn to bridge the gap from their own group to other groups in their society. In order to support children in this, it is essential that the personnel makes sure that:

   - **attention is paid to misconceptions, stereotyping and prejudices within the group;**

- **the ideas of the children (about, for example, people from ethnic minorities or disabled people) are explained more clearly;**

- **critical thinking is supported by activities dealing with these misconceptions;**

- **discriminatory interaction between children is never accepted.**

4. Cultivate children's ability to stand up for themselves and for others in the face of bias. These activist goals are further developed from the above in order to show children that change is possible when everyone works together. This is why it is an equally important part of the Anti-Bias Curriculum. In order to develop this, the personnel must make sure that:

   - **activities take place that are based on critical thinking. Neither children nor adults should accept injustice;**

   - **role models taken from the families and from history are to be used as examples;**

   - **activities are undertaken not only individually but also as a group;**

   - **the activities are child-friendly.**

The first two objectives are applicable to children from birth. We can regard these objectives as a mission that also summarises the content of the previous chapters in this book. The last two objectives are primarily directed towards children from the age of four. Derman-Sparks & the ABC Task Force (1989) give various practical examples on how to work on activist objectives even with preschool children. In this vein, she talks about the preschool teacher who reacted to the term 'flesh coloured' (used by a manufacturer on a box of plasters) with her class of three year olds. The children tried out the plasters and discovered that they only matched the skin colour of the white children. They wrote a letter to the manufacturer who reacted by sending them a box of transparent plasters.

Another one of Derman-Sparks' examples can be found in Brown (1998). At a kindergarten that made an extra effort to integrate disabled children, there were no parking places for the disabled. One day, a parent in a wheelchair could not come to a parents' meeting because she could not park close enough to the building. This was discussed the following day with the children who did not think that it was fair. They went to various places to see how parking places for the disabled were made and then created one in the school parking lot. From their classroom, they could see the parking lot and they saw how, at one point, a teacher parked there incorrectly. The children, who were too young to write, made up a 'citation' that was written out by the teacher, which they placed in the driver's windshield. They then saw how the driver parked correctly after that. By doing this, the children learned that working together can facilitate change, and this objective could be listed under the heading 'sense of public responsibility'. The two final objectives of the Anti-Bias Curriculum form an essential part of encouraging this in children. There is, after all, no point in raising children to be free, autonomous and self-aware citizens if they are not also raised to be socially responsible.

The Anti-Bias Curriculum contains an extensive package of suggestions, tips and concrete illustrations which can be used when working with children. Childrearing and education without prejudice begins with the creation of an educational environment that reflects and respects the diversity within the society. The environment provides the children with information on what adult educators do and do not consider important. Derman-Sparks & the ABC Task Force (1989) offer two objectives with which to make daycare centres, family daycare providers and kindergartens into anti-bias environments:

- **bring in more material that reflects people of colour and people with disabilities and which does not promote gender-stereotype activities;**

- **remove stereotypical images and improper material.**

She applies this to many aspects of the daycare and kindergarten environment: furnishings and decorations, the play material (books, make-believe play material, cutting and pasting material, dolls, and so on), and significantly, she

applies this to interpersonal relationships. Yet, Derman-Sparks as well as Stonehouse emphasise that their educational model is not a recipe book to be followed exactly.

There are some important aspects of adult-child interaction, whatever age group is addressed, that reoccur in Derman-Sparks' and Stonehouse's work. One of the primary themes of the curriculum is that the natural curiosity of children about differences is not curtailed but, on the contrary, is stimulated. This means that the questions of two and three year olds about differences in genitals, hair structure or skin colour is not glossed over, but is answered concretely in a manner that is appropriate to the age of the child. The educator encourages children to notice differences, but also to see similarities. By stimulating children's curiosity about themselves and others, and by giving them solid and correct information, a feeling of pride about oneself, of self-respect without superiority, can be encouraged. This applies not only to racial differences but also to differences in gender, abilities/disabilities, culture and so on.
Another recurring primary theme is that adults must not accept any form of discrimination at all. Degrading and hurtful statements by children must be systematically noticed and dealt with. Children then receive a clear reprimand but also a question that opens the door for a conversation about the stereotypical thinking or the prejudice that was hidden behind the degrading statement. Numerous observations in the curriculum show interactions in which children make statements about diversity and in which the adults' reactions are registered and commented upon. This leads to a list of recommendations to be used in practice. Derman-Sparks & the ABC Task Force (1989) state:

> ***Do not deny the differences in physical capacities among people. Saying that a deaf child is just like you is confusing and it prevents the child from receiving the information he or she is entitled to and that he or she needs to learn to communicate with you.***

An anti-bias reaction would help both to discover their differences as well as their similarities: 'You both like to play with clay. If you want to talk about this with each other, you will need to learn sign language.'

Contrary to the intentions of the authors, educators often do tend to use the Anti-Bias Curriculum as a recipe book. On this subject, Derman-Sparks would be more inclined to use the term 'journey': a long, personal road that must be travelled, and in which the travelling is more important than the destination. Stonehouse (1991) described it like this:

> ***Caring well for children is too complex for anyone who writes about it to be prescriptive, or to reduce it to a list of do's and don'ts … This means that it is not possible for one person to tell another exactly what to do. A basic goal is that children will learn that there is seldom one right way to do things; rather, there are many different ways. We must apply that principle in our own work … The most difficult part of any journey is taking the first step. Fortunately, it is not true that the rewards do not come until the destination is reached. They will come once the journey has commenced. Children, families and cultures are complex and changing. Caring well for children in ways that acknowledge cultural and linguistic diversity never allows one the luxury of having arrived permanently.***

A European anti-bias philosophy?

The Anti-Bias Curriculum clearly and concretely transforms into practice a means of supporting the identity development of every child; promoting communication with others; and actively combating prejudice and discrimination. In doing this, it correctly assumes that interaction among children of various groups will not, in itself, cause prejudice to disappear, and it assumes that it is necessary to have an active policy instigated by educators. Social concerns are combined with the concerns of developmental psychology. It is also greatly to its credit that the anti-bias curriculum does not limit the concept 'diversity' to only cultural or ethnic diversity. It considers interaction to be more important than the activity – even though it is often understood to be the other way around; and the manner in which fruitful interaction is described comes very close to the concept 'going meta' discussed in the previous chapter. The curriculum deals with bringing stereotypical ideas to the surface and stimulating 'thinking about thinking'. Finally, its value lies in it adapting examples and work methods to groups which are not diverse, and it strives to prove that the prevailing view that an Anti-Bias Curriculum is only useful when the group consists of children from various cultures is unfounded.

The first publications on this subject were primarily geared towards centre based care, while they are also significant for home based care. In this latter sector, which is growing in many Western European countries, children from ethnic minorities are often clearly underrepresented, and hence the belief still exists that dealing with diversity is 'not relevant'. Moreover, as has been discussed earlier, along with reluctance to adopt the anti-bias approach, there is the problem of too short a basic training for daycare providers. The long term and intensive process of attitude change remains a huge challenge here for those responsible for these services.

Fortunately, over the last few years there has been increasing international interest in anti-bias approaches being adopted by family daycare providers. This is shown for example, by a recent conference of the International Family Day Care Organisation, held in Glasgow in 1999, which placed the core points in this book high on its agenda. Experiences in various countries have shown that anti-bias literature can also form a good basis for the education and training of family daycare providers. Australia, in particular, appeared to play a prominent role here. There, and in other countries, extensive training packs based on the work of Derman-Sparks were developed for them (Jones, 1997; Khoshkhesal, 1996).

However, it should be said that the Anti-Bias Curriculum was primarily developed in the United States, and of course, it must be adapted to the various historical and cultural contexts in which it is to be used. The issue of identity is not the same in American and European contexts. The concepts 'ethnic' and 'cultural' identity sometimes carry different weight because they are rooted in different histories. The first chapters of this book explained how essential it is that identity is seen as dynamic and in the plural. Multiple cultural identity is a key concept in childrearing and education, and the interpretation of the term may well be historically different in the United States as in Europe. This has been pointed out by various authors.

According to Maalouf (1998), in the so-called New World countries, and in the United States in particular, national identity is historically created from the combined input of a multitude of immigrant groups from all the world's countries. Some of the groups have come of their own free will, while others were 'imported' against their will. Through a long and extremely difficult

123

process – which is certainly not finished – all the descendants of these immigrants, together with the descendants of the original population, are gradually coming to identify with the society in which they live. It is this process of identification with the society that sometimes tends to cause problems, rather than the acceptance of the principle of the diversity itself.

In Europe, the question of national identity is posed, however, in a completely different manner. Over the last decades, Western Europe has become a destination for immigrants, but has never defined itself as such. Many Europeans still find it difficult to expand their identity to more than one culture. This especially applies to those who, for generations, have been denied the right of self-government. Europeans must learn to regard their identity as the sum of all their linguistic, cultural, and other differences. Europe can only exist if its inhabitants understand that they can feel European and still be Flemish, British, French, and so on (Maalouf, 1998).

While the concept of multiple identity is much less obvious in Europe, it is no less essential for the construction of a peaceful society. The entire discussion surrounding 'integration' of minority groups is formulated differently in Western Europe with its history of nation states. Within this context, France is practically a prototype of the concept of the nation state. Antonio Perotti[82] (see Malbert 1998) summarises it as follows: a classical intercultural approach can only be implemented in France with great difficulty because of the universal concept of 'right', which is an inheritance from the French Revolution, a basic value that appears to prevent certain communities with specific cultural rights from being recognised (Malbert, 1998). Based on this history, it is understandable that two trends have evolved in the pedagogy of dealing with diversity. For convenience sake, and ideologically, we could describe these trends, somewhat simplistically, as a French one and an Anglo-Saxon one. Belgium lies at the crossroads of these two traditions, as described by the social scientists Swyngedouw *et al* (1999):

> ***In Brussels, there is a unique coincidence between Flemish and French policy with well-known differences in emphasis in the interpretation of the official integration policy. While the French, in the tradition of French assimilation, adopt a reluctant attitude with respect to the public recognition of minority cultures, the Flemish side has more of a tendency towards a diluted form of***

> ***Anglo-Saxon multiculturalism. Inasmuch as the integration policy on both sides of the language border has, however, a particularly pragmatic, non-orthodox character à la Belge ('the Belgian way'), this is more about differences in emphasis than differences in ideology.*** (my parentheses)

As an ex-resident of Brussels, I can certainly subscribe to this definition. However one looks at it, whether one tends to lean towards the French tradition of studying integration from an individualistic point of view, or towards the Anglo-Saxon tradition, in which the concept 'community' is emphasised, the whole discussion on integration becomes an insoluble jumble if the concept of multiple identity is not recognised and accepted. Only then can we rediscover each other in a growing and developing society instead of locking ourselves into a lost past.

The various social and historical contexts of the 'Old World' and the 'New World', do not detract from the fact that the anti-bias curriculum is an important source of inspiration. It must, however, be adapted to the European character and, within Europe, to each of the regional characters. The manner in which, for example, multilingualism is dealt with will probably be very different, just as the social power differences among the various groups will take shape differently. In doing this, more emphasis must be placed on the theoretical and practical development of the concept of multiple identity.

A second consideration about the Anti-Bias Curriculum deals with the concept *pre-prejudices*, a key assumption of the curriculum. From the literature review in the previous chapters, it is clear that identity and the image of the 'other' do not arise solely from the social environment. Determining the origin of the self-image and the image of others is an exceedingly complex undertaking that demands a finely-tuned approach. Anti-bias practice, however, often pays almost exclusive attention to societal factors, in spite of the fact that children do not acquire their prejudices exclusively from the adult world. A good many other factors also play a role, such as the fear of the strange and different or peer group opinions.[83]

In reality, there is a world of difference between unconscious prejudice or inadvertent discrimination, and the conscious creation of an ideology that

declares the superiority of one group. Within the framework of childrearing and education, it is probably more useful and realistic to assume that everyone can be both the perpetrator and the victim of unconscious prejudices and discrimination, and that it is impossible to eradicate or avoid these entirely. However, we certainly can and should, exert a great deal of influence on dealing with this.

There are a growing number of publications on the attitudes and skills which educators need in order to carry out an anti-bias curriculum. The numerous illustrations, activities and examples may give the impression that the curriculum is primarily geared towards a cognitive approach. The descriptions of interactions between educators and children do indeed, strongly lean towards the learning of concepts. The publications focus on the transfer of knowledge and on verbal communication and can give the impression that simply providing information is enough to combat prejudice. This impression is strengthened by the fact that many examples show verbal interaction being of primary importance. Obviously, verbal interaction is only suitable for children who can already express themselves and is, therefore, only useful for children around three years of age. Very young children often form impressions non-verbally. A verbal approach does not completely mesh with the European tradition in which care institutions – in contrast to elementary school – often describe their own identity and culture in terms of the emotional and social development through play rather than through intellectual development. While these reservations have more to do with the style or form of the publications than with their deeper meaning, thus clearly indicate that a good deal of work on interpretation and adjustment is necessary.

These criticisms do not detract from the fact that the Anti-Bias Curriculum, in its practical application, offers an invaluable source of insights and suggestions. its great strength is that it was developed in close cooperation with practice. Most of the books were written only after many educators had experimented for many years, generating a mass of useful information. In the following chapters, in which educational and childrearing practices in childcare centres and kindergartens will be looked at more closely, the experience that was gained in the Anti-Bias Curriculum programmes described in the writings of Derman-Sparks, Stonehouse and others will certainly be a good reference.

What now?

'Education in diversity' is a broader concept than simply the interests of children from cultural or ethnic minorities. It concerns the points of special interest in education for all children during the coming decades in a world that is changing at an ever faster pace, and in which interpersonal communication is becoming increasingly important. As discussed in the previous chapter's 'colour blindness' section, an educational philosophy can never be based on equal treatment for all children, but must be based on giving each child what he or she needs, implying that one must individualise and differentiate.

If only for these reasons, the adjustment model presented in the analysis of Vedder, Bouwer & Pels (1996) cannot be a suitable model for childcare or the kindergarten. The goal of the adjustment model is the adjustment of people from other cultures to the dominant culture; it supposes that there is such a thing as *the* 'dominant culture'.[84] It is based on an antiquated, monolithic mode of thinking about identity and culture, and on an outmoded 'nationalistic' social model in which each nation state is uniform. The European reality is, however, one in which *post-national* models of European citizenship, in which the emphasis lies more on the citizenship than on the process of negotiation about cultural identities and power relationships, are much more fruitful (Swyngedouw *et al*, 1999).

Further, according to Maalouf (1998):

> ***In connection to immigration, there are two extreme concepts that recur. The first concept assumes that the host country is a blank page onto which everyone writes as desired, or even worse, a vacant lot where anyone can settle with all his or her baggage without doing anything to change his or her gestures or habits. The other extreme concept sees the host country as a page that has already been filled with writing and is printed, as a place where the laws, the religion, the cultural customs, etc. are set in stone to be adopted by every immigrant.***

Neither view is realistic; they are both sterile and damaging. In the adjustment model and the transition model described by Bouwer and Vedder (1995), integration is viewed from only one direction. The transition model asks how

we can take the dynamics of the target group (immigrants) into account during integration. The dynamics, characteristics and the social hierarchy of the dominant culture are, however, not taken into account, so that it seems as though the dominant culture is something static.

For these reasons, we would be more inclined to use the last two models – the contact model and the cultural change model – as our basis than the first two. This does, however, not detract from the fact that certain groups in society, and not only immigrants, need extra support in order to prevent social exclusion. An educational policy of diversity deals with a great deal more than simply the immigrant population; it deals with the education of all children, or rather, of each child. Nonetheless, the transition model's concern for the social integration of children from ethnic minorities is valid. Chapter Eight 'The Tower of Babel' will go into this in more detail.

Chapters One 'I am me' and Two 'Writing one's own story' focused on the importance of supporting even very young children in creating a flexible multiple identity. This should, without a doubt, be the basis for every educational philosophy.

Chapters Three 'The Other' and Four 'The Meeting' discussed the other side of the coin: how children are hampered in their contacts with other children by prejudices, stereotypes, fear or social factors. In addition to addressing the self-image, the educational model should, therefore, also pay a great deal of attention to 'the meeting' and to the necessary negotiation skills. These two cornerstones return in the first two objectives formulated by Derman-Sparks & the ABC Task Force (1989) as the identity objective and the empathy objective. From an anti-bias perspective, contact that leads to positive relationships is not possible without also including the final two objectives (critical thinking and taking action). The following needs to be added: the condition that identity is not narrowed down to cultural identity, but is seen as a flexible concept in which many groups of reference can play a role. Every individual must have the freedom to determine for him or herself which groups play which roles. In practice, this will come down to what is described as the 'contact model' in the analysis by Bouwer and Vedder (1995), in which elements from the 'cultural change model' are also present. When the contact model is followed, it is also

important to take Bouwer and Vedder's critical reservations into account; that simply bringing children from various ethnic backgrounds together does not mean, in itself, an education in diversity; and that activities which allow the stimulation of meta-thinking about diversity can add significantly to heterogeneous groups, but can, in turn, also confirm stereotyping.

A tourist approach

One of the greatest dangers of the 'multicultural' approach is the tendency to lapse into stereotypes and tourist activities. The term comes from Derman-Sparks & the ABC Task Force (1989) and gives a slightly different rendering of the philosophy of the contact model. A tourist approach brings children in contact with other cultures by introducing the artefacts of those cultures: food, traditional clothing and household items. Multicultural activities are special events, separate from the daily programme (Derman-Sparks, 1989, 1998). In the words of Nahima Lanjri (1998):[85] 'A happy-go-lucky business in the form of a multicultural school day with a sermon on tolerance and couscous and mint tea for lunch.'

A tourist's approach in a Belgian daycare centre means, for example, that at the end of Ramadan, Moroccan parents are asked to come to school in traditional clothing to prepare Moroccan snacks which they then eat with the children, and for that one day the children are allowed to eat with their hands. This is the way the children are 'taught' about Moroccan culture. The paradox here is that the ethnic Belgian's own culture is never 'taught' like this. Easter for example is not seen as something 'different', and it is assumed that all the children and parents know about it and want to participate in the institution's activities.

A tourist's approach is paternalistic and accentuates the exotic differences instead of dealing with situations from daily life. It assumes that the 'others' form one monolithic block, which is something that far-right nationalistic organisations would like to hear. It limits itself to superficial little visits to the other culture, after which everyone returns to the 'normal' order of the day. In this approach, the children learn more about how the Turks live or lived in Turkey or the Chinese in China than how the various groups live in Belgium. In the recent film *Ça commence aujourd'hui* ('It begins today'), we see a wonderful caricature of this when, for a school festival, two North African women with

saucers of cookies take their places on a sand pile in front of an imitation Bedouin tent. Nobody talks to them; they seem to be more like sticks of furniture than real people with their own emotions and desires.[86]

In a tourist's approach, the opinions of the members of the culture that is portrayed are often not taken into account; there is no place for individualism. Moreover, only a limited number of cultural groups are dealt with, so that the diversity within these groups disappears. The power relationship between the dominant group, which does things 'the right way', and the other groups is not questioned (Brown, 1998).

The likely effect of this approach is that the intended objectives are not realised. There is even the risk that it will have the opposite effect. After all, what does it contribute to the self-image of the child whose culture is displayed in such a stereotypical manner? What message does this send to the children from the dominant culture?

A tourist's approach can, according to Derman-Sparks & the ABC Task Force (1989), have the following effects: *trivialisation*, the organisation of activities that are exclusively connected to feasts or food, and in which parents are only involved at these times: *tokenism*, one black doll among all the white ones, or one corner of the room with 'ethnic' images are the only visible forms of diversity; and *stereotyping*, only images of 'other' children as they used to live in their villages, images of majority world children or of people in traditional festival dress that bear no resemblance to how the various groups live today.

Derman-Sparks proposes a number of guidelines that help avoid the tourist pitfalls when organising activities.

- **Always connect the cultural activities to an individual child and his or her family.**

- **Remember that, even though cultural customs are shared by a large group, each family experiences its own culture in its own, personal manner that fits into a continuum ranging from deeply embedded in traditional culture to loosely connected to consciously different.**

136

- Connect cultural activities to normal daily life (language, family stories, daily customs and habits, and so on. Festivals are only one, special, aspect).

- Explore diversity from the standpoint that everyone has a cultural identity, and not only those whose cultural or physical appearances are visibly 'different' from people whose cultural identity stems from the dominant culture.

- Allow the cultural diversity to permeate all the daily activities, systematically connecting it to daily life and the interests of the children (including living situations, family structure, and daily menu rather than the festival menu).

- Avoid continually talking about 'we' when discussing cultural customs. It is preferable to use the first person: *'I usually do it like this, how do you do it?'*

- Also explore the similarities between people of different ethnic groups: for example, we both feel that politeness and obedience are important, but the way we express this is different.

- Begin with the diversity that is present in the group, rather than talking about external groups. In groups that only have children from one culture, however, it will be necessary to bring the diversity in from outside. In that case, the cultural groups that are introduced must have some concrete connection with real children and their families (Derman-Sparks & the ABC Task Force, 1989).

Because of the risk of lapsing into a tourist approach, the final chapter – which deals with concrete practices – avoid using feasts as examples of dealing with diversity. That does not mean that we feel that parties have no place at the care institution. They can occupy an important place and have an important function when they are based on a daily tradition of diversity, and can form a highpoint in cooperation with parents or with the neighbourhood. But, in our experience in counselling groups, feasts are much more inclined to provoke

stereotyping than other smaller, daily activities; and people quickly forget that it is not the activity itself but the interaction that is of paramount importance.

Despite these reservations, it is possible that the same activity can show both a tourist approach and a well-considered educational philosophy in dealing with diversity. Here is an example. Baking *chapattis* together with a child's Indian mother, particularly when that is a part of the mother's daily life, is an expression of respect for diversity in a daycare centre where it is the norm to invite parents to take part in activities with children. It would be a tourist approach if the mother is invited once to a predominantly homogenous, 'white' centre because 'she is so special'. Whether or not an activity is folkloric or stereotypical depends a great deal upon the context in which the activity takes place. Our experience in group counselling at the VBJK has shown us that institutions that begin working on respect for diversity often first go through a phase in which such 'folkloric' activities are organised. Perhaps then this should not be judged too harshly, but instead be seen as a stage through which the team must pass before being able to integrate diversity into the daily programme.

As has been repeatedly emphasised by all the authors in this field, the pedagogy of diversity – and of education for self-awareness and kindredship – is not a component that is added to the programme at the institution. Identity perception, social skills, a democratic society or justice are not luxurious ideals that one might introduce if there is time. They are the essential building blocks of education and childrearing, and they should permeate all activities and everything that happens.

In the following chapters, this educational philosophy will be concretely interpreted with regard to children cared for by family daycare providers, daycare centres, preschool and kindergartens. The first section will deal with interacting with the children's families and extended families – one of the most essential building blocks of education in diversity. The rest of the chapter will deal with other aspects concerning life within the group, such as multilingualism, the furnishings and the choice of materials.

Notes

73. The network uses the term 'explicitly formulated educational or child-rearing philosophy'. Having such a philosophy is one of 40 objectives – to be met by 2006 – for provisions for young children in the European Union.

74. The appearance of Paolo Freire's book 'Pedagogy of the oppressed' (1970) (see Sources) was a well-known milestone at this time.

75. For more information on the background of Derman-Sparks and the Anti-Bias Curriculum, see the video documentary 'How good it is to be you!' (see Sources, Peeters & Vandenbroeck (1998a)). The video contains an extensive interview with Derman-Sparks and her colleagues, illustrated with real-life images from the childcare centres in Los Angeles with which she worked (Peeters & Vandenbroeck, 1998a). For a more detailed overview of the educational activities in connection with this subject, see Derman-Sparks & Brunson Phillips, 1997.

76. For more information, see the report on this project, which also contains a presentation by Louise Derman-Sparks entitled 'Respect for diversity' in Somers 1998 (see Bibliography). The CD-ROM that was made within the framework of the MEQ project contains an extensive trilingual section in which Derman-Sparks explains her concepts (Vandenbroeck, 1998a). Details of the CD-ROM can be found in the Bibliography.

77. This refers to the DECET network (Diversity in Early Childhood Education and Training). For more information see: http://www.decet.org. This network also has Derman-Sparks to thank for providing an important source of inspiration.

78. While the term 'curriculum' sounds academic in Europe, and in this context, reminds one of a syllabus or a school curriculum, it is a term that is often used in the United States to describe the entire 'educational programme' or 'educational concept' for preschool children: the complete set of activities, interactions, arrangements, and so on.

79. This refers to a meeting of the DECET network (Diversity in Early Childhood Education and Training), a network of professionals in the education and on-the-job training for educators in preschool education. For a more extensive overview of these goals, and their implications for personnel and the training of personnel, see Gaine & van Keulen (1997). The objectives can be found in several translations on http://www.decet.org .

133

80. While Gaine & van Keulen primarily mean childcare centres; their points are also relevant to family daycare providers. Where necessary, the significance of this inclusion will be indicated.

81. Here, 'personnel' explicitly also refers to family daycare providers.

82. Antonio Perotti was chairman of the Conseil de la cooperation culturelle (Council for cultural cooperation) of the Council of Europe for many years.

83. We must be extremely careful with the terms prejudice, discrimination and racism. The terms 'anti-bias' and 'anti-racist' also label the educational programme in a negative manner as they are the descriptions of what is not wanted. As a result, some authors prefer a different description such as, 'education in the spirit of self-awareness and kindredship' or 'education in diversity' in which diversity relates to both the social level (including the diversity of cultures and gender) and personal level (the multiple identity).

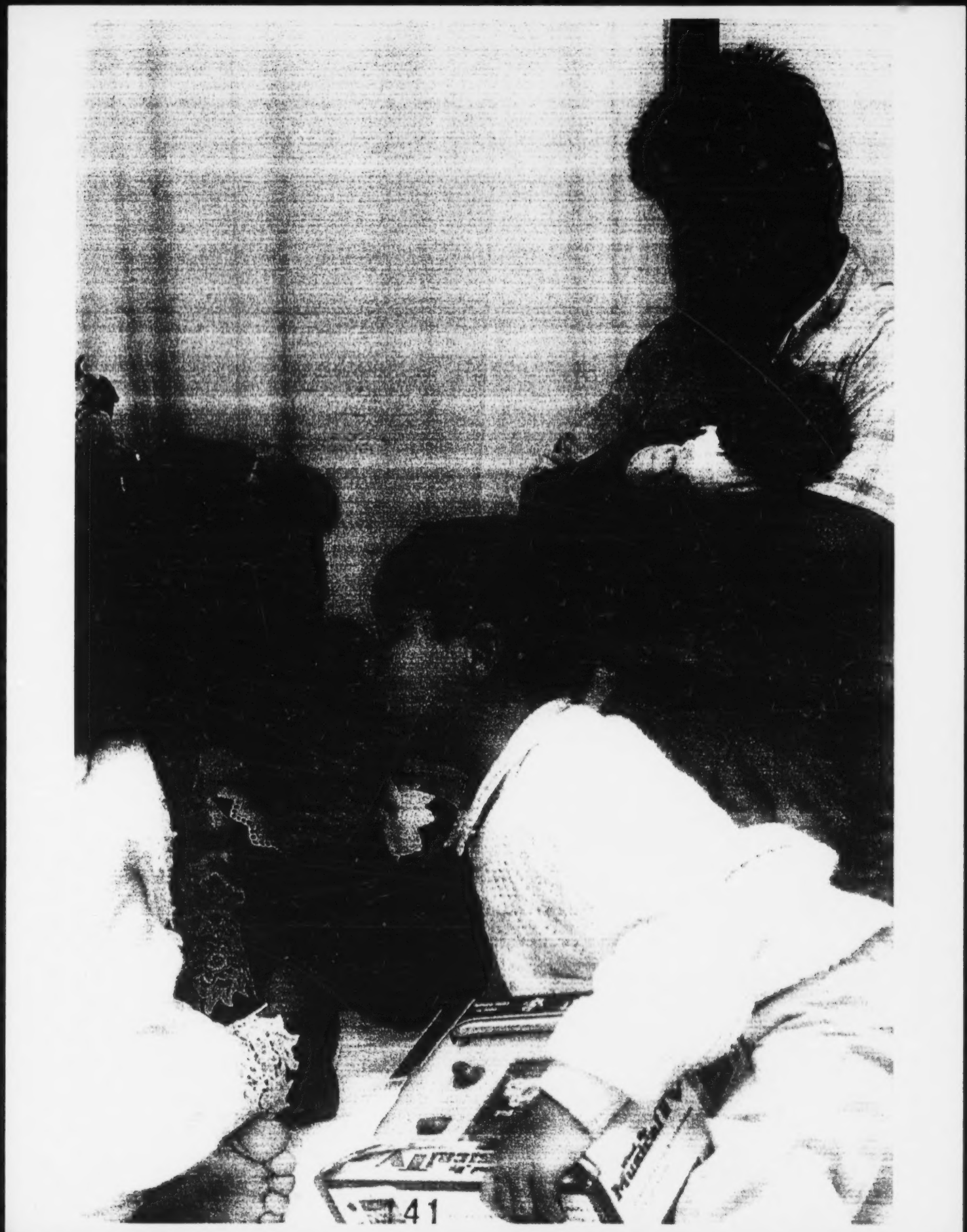
84. A good example on how absurd it can become when we try to define the dominant culture is exemplified in a speech by Kortmann, defining the Dutch culture during the opening of the Dutch Lower House:

> ***For nearly a century, we have had communal norms and values poured into us through education, newspapers, radio and television. Because of this and other reasons, we are – in spite of the exceptions – all democrats, tolerant, anti-colonists, anti-apartheid, anti-militaristic, pro-Israel, anti-elitist, pro Koot and Bie, and still, pro-monarchy. (Kortmann in Pinto, 1994)***

Is this what we expect from ethnic minorities? In Flanders, until recently, it was the custom to test all ethnic minorities on their knowledge of 'The Flemish Culture' when they applied for Belgian citizenship. A well-known and hilarious example is that they were asked how to make cauliflower in white sauce.

85. Nahima Lanjri was a staff member of the Flemish Community Ministry, responsible for fighting poverty and for immigration policy. She is also a member of the City Council in Antwerp.

86. This is a beautiful, sensitive film directed by Bertrand Tavernier, made in 1999, about a kindergarten in an underprivileged neighbourhood in northern France.



Chapter six

On to the family

The previous chapters suggest that the educational project that is advocated is based on two sets of objectives. According to Derman-Sparks & the ABC Task Force's terminology (1989), every child should be helped to develop their (multiple) identity and develop empathy for others. Verbunt (1999) advocates teaching children to deal in a personal manner with diversity, and teaching them social sensitivity so that they can find a balance 'between the respect for the individual and the collective rights' (Somers, 1998b). And then, in UNESCO's terms:

> ***All individuals and groups have the right to be different, to consider themselves as different and to be regarded as such. However, the diversity of lifestyles and the right to be different may not, in any circumstances, serve as a pretext for racial prejudice ...*** *(UNESCO, 1978).*

Whatever the terminology or particular emphasis of each approach, the educator's primary task is to support children in the development of their identity. One of the ways to do this is to show respect for the child's cultural background or backgrounds. One of the principle keys that educators hold in their hands is their relationship with the child's family.[87] The Convention on the Rights of the Child clearly states that the responsibilities, rights and duties of the parents are to be respected (Article 5). The European Commission Network on Childcare has, furthermore, put a great deal of work into the set of objectives with respect to the parents' participation and involvement in daycare. Target 34, for example, states:

> ***Parents are collaborators and participants in early years services. As such they have a right to give and receive information and the right to express their***

> ***views both formally and informally. The decision-making processes of the services should be fully participative, involving parents, all staff, and, where possible, children (European Commission Network on Child-Care, 1996).***

The fact that so much attention is given to parents in all the official childcare documents is no accident. Children cannot be considered as separate entities from their parents.

Identity and loyalty

The *loyalty* that all children have towards their parents is an essential given. The fact alone that the parents bore them makes the children feel connected to them; that they owe their survival to the parents. This inspires loyalty, and this loyalty can never be lost, as can be seen for example, with adopted children who want to know who their biological parents are. Alongside this initial loyalty, (called existential or vertical loyalty), children also have loyalty towards their family because of the care received (Onderwaater, 1986; Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, B. 1994).[88] Even children who have been badly treated by their parents, for example, abused or seriously neglected, retain a strong loyalty. Because loyalty is so important, it can be argued that respecting a child's identity cannot be separated from respecting his or her parents.

We can only relate successfully to children and support them in their identity development to the extent to which we can place them in their proper contexts. The first and most important element in this context is the family. He who hurts the parents, hurts the child. Therefore, educators cannot have a relationship with the child based on mutual trust, if that trust is not also extended to the parents. Respect for the child's individuality is impossible to realise without respecting the individuality of the parents. Parents' backgrounds, convictions, values, desires, fears and dreams about their children should be a continuous presence when deciding upon the care of the child. In previous chapters, we have seen how the daycare centre, family daycare provider or kindergarten is the first place where children come into contact with the public domain. Thus the diversity of norms and values present in the educational community confronts us as educators with our own convictions.

Educators must be very aware about any impressions given about parents. What kind of message does it send to a child of two lesbian parents when the whole

class does an activity for Father's Day; and what is the child of a single mother supposed to do? What kind of message does the educator pass on to the child whose parents, as is their custom, eat with their hands at home, if the educator asks the children to eat 'properly' with a spoon and a fork – because it is 'dirty' to eat with one's hands? What are children supposed to do with a form for a field trip that has to be signed by both parents and handed in the following morning, when they live with their mother one week and their father the next? What message is given to the child who comes to daycare with threadbare clothes and hears, 'Come, let's take off those old clothes and I'll give you a nice shirt.' Or, to the child who is told to take that bag of chips back home because 'here we eat healthy foods'; or to the child who speaks a different language that he or she has to learn to talk 'nicely' here, 'just like us'.

A gap can grow when there is a major difference between the educational customs and views of the institution (the public domain) and those of the family (the private domain). Whether the institution successfully fulfils the role as a 'bridge' between the private and public domains depends upon the quality of the dialogue that is established between the educator and family. (We will return to this dialogue at the end of this chapter.)

So many people, so many opinions

Each family has its own beliefs and ways of childrearing. When is it better to breast feed babies and when should they be bottle fed? Should babies sleep alone or with their parents? When should you take children's preferences and desires into account, and when must they simply accept what their parents say? Should bedtime be at a fixed time or is it better to have a flexible bedtime that can be adjusted to the situation? Should we urge children to finish their food or will this provoke even more resistance next time? And what should be done about a child who continually refuses to eat? When should the children have that extra scarf or sweater so that they do not catch cold? When may children play in the street with their friends; when are they old enough to cross the street alone? Should you pick up babies when they are fussing. Is it spoiling them or is it good for their emotional security? Should we teach children not to use swear words, or is it better to ignore the bad language hoping that it will disappear by itself? Should children clean up their own rooms and what is 'clean' enough? Is it all right to bring a young baby to daycare or should you keep him or her at home a bit longer?

It looks as if you need the negotiating skills of a CEO and have to be able to make compromises that make the Balkan Peace Agreement look like a card game, just to get through one day of parenting. There are few areas that have as many differences of opinion as the subject of what is good for children. Everyone seems to have an opinion: friends, grandparents, doctors, psychologists and educators. Never before has so much been published on raising children and never before has so much different advice been given. All those different parents, with all those different backgrounds and ideas, then congregate at daycare.

Educators, then, look to science for something to hold onto. 'How', 'when' and 'for whom' remain the vital questions in education. According to Bruner (1996), the challenge is in placing our knowledge in the proper context – daycare or kindergarten – which itself is embedded in a certain culture and which should initiate a relationship with parents who are, themselves, each embedded in many other different cultures. Bruner continues that discussions on education and on 'what is good for children' must continually take the intuitive convictions of others into account. For this, he uses the term *folk pedagogy*. The answers to dilemmas and childrearing questions that every parent faces day in and day out centre on our popular pedagogy which is based on popular psychology (*folk psychology*). The 'folk beliefs' within a certain group about what mankind is like and how we function largely determines how that culture thinks that social justice should be organised, how children should be raised; how the needy should be cared for; and even how people should relate to each other (Harris, 1998). Thus, you could say, for example, that a popular attitude à la *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, in which one believes in the innocence and goodness of children, will entail a protective attitude from the educator who wants to save the child from the evil influences of society. However, a popular attitude *à la Sigmund Freud*, with its views on passions, emphasises the contribution of adults as role models and figures of identification in moral development. Super and Harkness use the term *parental ethnotheories* for this, by which they mean the values, educational goals and cultural concepts and the manner in which parents experience childrearing (Pels, 1998).

The only problem is that nobody today belongs to just one group or culture: we belong to several groups, each with its own influences, and we create our own

personal combination from these. Our ideas on childrearing and education are therefore also a complex combination of different influences, spiced with a touch of our own personal flavour. An issue that comes up regularly at daycare and school is: should we gather knowledge of cultural values that would be typical of certain subgroups; or should we concentrate on treating each parent as an individual?

Let us discuss this in somewhat more depth with a personal example. My father was fairly strict. I still remember how we children would be sitting in the car squabbling and he would, while driving, turn around halfway and yell, 'If I weren't so nice …' and then, with a wide swing of his arm, hit the first head that happened to be in the line of fire.[89] I remember how, long after bedtime, he hit us with his slippers when we were still secretly playing. I would never be as physically strict with my son. Thus you could say that I am certainly no proponent of the 'culture' of fathering that I learned at home.[90] Many members of my generation share that feeling.

These days, the manner in which I deal with the daily decisions and ideals concerning raising my son, is only partly determined by the way I was raised. It is only slightly determined by the fact that I studied education; and partly determined by my experience as a boy scout leader and, more significantly, my long discussions with these colleagues on childrearing and education. It is also determined by numerous discussions with friends and colleagues who have children about the same age as my son – and certainly by a lot more that I am possibly not even aware of.

In his unique reference book, 'L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime', French historian Phillippe Ariès (1987) gives a historical overview of the changing views on childrearing and education. This book includes the famous statement, 'We are, today, as a father, nobody's son' (*'Comme père nous sommes les fils de personne'*). A hiatus has been created between how we think about education and how previous generations thought about it. This has also appeared in research in which Italian fathers were interviewed in depth about their norms, values and views concerning fatherhood, and in which they made it clear that they absolutely do not want to resemble their fathers (Ventimiglia, 1994).[91]

Another example is the trend towards being a 'new father', who are said to be less distant and more caring. One drawback though, is that in many studies, the mother is used as the means of comparison and norm, so that new fathers still don't have their own identity. The rift with the past as far as parenthood is concerned, is concisely summarised in the conclusions of a piece of research by the Directorate of Social Affairs of the European Commission: 'The parents of today make up the first generation of parents who, when fulfilling their parental roles, find no support in their own experiences with child-rearing' (European Community Directorate of Social Affairs, 1993). In 'The Nurture Assumption', Harris (1998) also argues convincingly that the way in which parents raise their children is influenced more by their peers than by the way they themselves were raised. Seeing the unanimity within one's peer group, it is easy to believe that this is the right way because everyone else within the group does it this way. Equally, when we look back at the first chapter, it becomes clear that our norms and values are now shaped by a multitude of influences and groups – in contrast to the more homogeneous, traditional society of our parents' time. This also means that concepts such as *parental ethnotheories* have to be thoroughly qualified. The core word for every parental theory appears, however, to be *change*.

Change

An enormous amount has changed and is still changing in family situations. From the 1960s, the division of labour between men and women in Europe has changed in an evolution that is by no means over. Other more recent changes have had a tremendous impact on family life. Ferri and Smith's (1996) research on this subject provides an overview of significant changes in Great Britain. Their findings have been corroborated by partial investigations in other countries and apply, perhaps, to all of Western Europe. Below is a summary of the changes that Ferri and Smith have identified, to which I have added some sources concerning other countries.

Changes in family structure

There is a growing number of couples who live together without being married; more families who have split up; and newly structured families. These changes result in a greater diversity in family structure. The number of divorces, single parent families, intentionally unmarried mothers, dual-parenting relationships and step-families is increasing (Dumon, 1995; Vandenberghe, 1999). Some

children whose parents are divorced have regular contact with both parents, others do not. Some live in newly structured families and have, therefore, step-brothers and sisters. To this list must be added other and newer forms of family structure. Approximately 20,000 children in the Netherlands grow up with homosexual parents, of which 10 percent have homosexual fathers and 90 percent have lesbian mothers (Borghs, 1998); at least 15 percent of all children under the age of three do not live with a married couple consisting of the child's biological parents (Buysse, 1999); and in Great Britain, 17 percent of all children are born outside marriage (Burghes *et al*, 1997). In short, this heterogeneity in family structure forces educational institutions to be much more creative in their approach.

Postponing starting a family

People are having children at a later age and are having fewer children. Children are becoming scarce and they now have a greater symbolic value (Vandenberghe, 1999). The trend towards having fewer children is found among both Europeans and immigrants from North Africa (Lesthaeghe, 1997). Flanders and the Netherlands have the lowest birth rate in decades, and it is expected that the birth rate in the Netherlands and Belgium will decline by about 10 percent by 2010 (Buysse, 1999). Raes (1997) points out that as children become scarce and more desired, expectations will increase. Families are increasingly seen as the means to achieve the self-perfection of its members and less as a goal in themselves. Parents have high expectations of their children, yet at the same time, families are more isolated than ever. This increases the parents' insecurity about education and childrearing. Paradoxically, in a period of increased criticism of the government, parents expect more and more of the government with respect to education and childrearing.

Insecurity in childrearing

Insecurity in childrearing together with the changing role patterns within families, results in parents having high expectations of professional educators. For young children, these expectations generally centre on basic socialisation skills such as table manners, toilet training, and politeness. For older children, these include educational goals such as developing relationship skills and sex education. Because of the pressure of the parents, a growing number of teachers and educators feel that they are being over-questioned, and in their view, parents

do not accept their responsibility sufficiently. This evolution, together with changes in family structure, has led Raes to talk about insecurity as the existential condition of families (Raes, 1997; Peeters & Vandenbroeck, 1998b). The demand for provision of educational support in childcare will increase in the coming years. This task goes much further than 'the reconciliation of work and family'.

A changing labour situation

In the last few years, there has been increasing job insecurity and an increase in the number of parents who work outside of traditional office hours. This flexibility in the labour market does not only mean a greater variation in when people work, but also a greater diversity in the number of hours worked. The number of mothers who work non-office hours is on the increase: more than half the mothers of preschool children work at the weekends and outside office hours. At least 56 percent of these children have mothers who work during these hours (Buysse, 1999). This influences, of course, the division of labour within the family.

An increasing economic disparity

The economic gap is widening between the families in which both partners work, and the families in which neither partner works. Approximately five percent of Flemish children under 12 years of age live in a family with no professional income. Meanwhile, for one income families, it is increasingly difficult to maintain a certain standard of living. The participation of women in the labour force is, in a number of cases, a pure necessity in order to maintain a minimum standard of comfort. Approximately 20 percent of young children live in a family that has difficulty making ends meet. When broader criteria than only monthly income are used as a definition of poverty,[92] then 4.3 percent of all children born in 1998 can be said to be underprivileged. This number has risen slightly, but systematically, during the last few years (Buysse, 1999). These findings are important as economic insecurity reinforces educational insecurity.

Family ideology

The ideology of the family needs to be considered. There have been fundamental changes in the norms, values and family expectations. An increasing number of people experience a conflict of interest between family childrearing tasks and

their own self-fulfilment. In this sense, children, along with being a source of joy, are seen as an aspect of family life that prevents one from pursuing one's own needs. This evolution is strongly linked to the changes in the division of labour between men and women. As stated previously, a family is decreasingly a goal in itself, and increasingly a means to self-completion. In many families, each partner, in order to pursue personal goals, places higher demands on the family. The fact that the family in itself has become subordinate to individual family members is partly the result of the greater value placed on children (Raes, 1997).

Other cultures

As a last point on change, Vandenberghe (1999) adds that children today come into contact directly or indirectly, by choice or otherwise, with *other cultures.*

All of these changes strongly influence the world in which children are born and grow up. And still, group childcare often takes as its norm the western, middle-class, father-and-mother ideal family. This is why many authors argue that, in order for educators to be able to deal with a diversity of parents, they must have a minimal amount of knowledge about the educational and childrearing customs and values in various subcultures. The literature on 'working interculturally' in particular pays a great deal of attention to this (see, for example, de Graaff *et al*, 1990).

Subcultures in childrearing – childrearing in subcultures

Research has recently been done on value-orientation among Turkish and Moroccan women in Belgium, by, for example, Lesthaeghe (1997), and Swyngedouw, Phalet and Deschouwer (1999).[93] In the Netherlands, a large scale study was recently completed within the framework of the research project 'Opvoeding en Opvoedingsondersteuning' (Education and Educational Support) by the 'Programmerings College Onderzoek Jeugd', (Programming College for Youth Research).[94] In this study, native Dutch families, Moroccan (Pels, 1998), Turkish (Nijsten, 1998), Chinese (Geense & Pels, 1998), Surinamese-Creole families (Distelbrink, 1998) and Somalian refugee families (Bouwmeester *et al*, 1998) were questioned about their norms and values with respect to childrearing. A piece of research has also been done on lesbian parenting in Belgium (Brewaeys, 1997). Most of these recent studies have certain factors in

common. They try, scientifically, to find answers to the questions that trouble educators in a heterogeneous society; and, they distance themselves from earlier traditions.

Formerly, research was primarily concerned with describing certain subgroups. Minority group A was compared with dominant group B (the control group), and the differences were examined. Attempts were then made to explain the culture and way of life in group A. This research, which dates from the 1960s and 1970s, did not take into account the diversity *within* group A, and has ultimately led to alienation and insecurity (de Graaff, 1995). It was based on the premise that the differences *between* the dominant group B, on the one hand, and the minority group A, on the other, were larger or more significant than the differences *within* the groups. The results of this research are well-known: for example, Turkish and Moroccan families are characterised by an 'F culture' (a family oriented culture with an emphasis on honour, respect, and so on); in contrast to the native population that belonged to either the 'G culture' (a culture with emphasis on self-development and autonomy) or the 'I culture' (as in 'me, myself, and I') (Pinto, 1994). In reality, there are various combinations within each group, and none really exists in totality.

In more recent research, greater emphasis is placed on the diversity and the dynamic of change within each group. Research no longer concentrates on the common characteristics of the members of a certain subgroup, nor on what differentiates them from others. Recent research concentrates on heterogeneity itself: the differences that exist within subgroups, the dynamic, and the change. For those interested in statistics, it could be said that one speaks now less in terms of sterile averages and more in terms of standard deviation. Reality is discussed in terms such as *heteropraxis* and *fragmentation of the modernity* (Lesthaeghe, 1997), *value pluralism* (Swyngedouw et al 1999), or of *differentiation and new mixtures* (Pels, 1998). These studies have provided us with a well thought out and balanced picture of childrearing customs in the various subgroups that form our society and which our educators come across to an increasing degree. These studies can help us to think less in stereotypical terms.

Pels[95] (1998) noticed that experts often act from the perspective of their own views, and from the perspective of child development and educational theories

based on either western society, or on stereotypes. For many years, people simply assumed that there were universal developmental goals and, therefore, universal educational systems to achieve these goals. The result of this was that the theories within the various disciplines involved were based on culturally dominant views, and so the research carried out was based, in fact, on an incomplete hypothesis (Pels, 1998). One clear example of this can be found in the book 'Mother of all myths' by Aminatta Forna (1999). Forna explains how, among scientists from John Bowlby[96] to Winnicott to Selma Freiberg, one view on motherhood has become the 'norm'. The concept of attachment theory, which postulates that exclusive attachment between mother and child as the most important attachment and a precondition for healthy development is considered universal.

Nonetheless, there is sufficient material to show that other models of motherhood occur in the world which can be just as valuable. The *comadre* (the 'co-mother') system is fairly common in Latin America. Forna gives another model in which children are informally adopted, living with another family for a period of time. She states that this is a normal part of life in Islamic communities, in Japan, Latin America, Africa, in the United States among Hawaiians and Native Americans, everywhere in the Caribbean, in India and Pakistan and in many more countries. This does not mean that the family in which the child is born relinquishes its involvement and loses its sense of attachment with the child. Forna argues that the premise of the attachment theory that there is only one natural kind of motherhood has led to an ideal of motherhood that is applied to all women. Even women in whose language the words for 'mother' and 'aunt' are the same, are told that they should not share the love of their child with anyone else (Forna, 1999).[97] Psychoanalytical literature can also be criticised for this as it focuses on the mother-father-child triad which, according to Françoise Dolto (see Liaudet 1998), 'is inherent in human nature'.[98]

Another example of ethnocentric thinking with respect to childrearing and education is the conviction that developmental stimulation is something private and personal: the parent-child relationship belongs at home and the educator-child relationship belongs at the institution. In reality, various cultures have other places where childrearing and education occur, such as in the Algerian

concept '*zanka*'. The *zanka* (play street) is not an ordinary street. It is a place for children between 'inside' (home) and 'outside' (the world); between the feminine world and the masculine one. It is an outside space in the immediate of the home – the distance depends upon the child's own interpretation. It is a safe place because it is familiar and the people who live there are familiar, as are the doorsteps, corners, footpaths, squares, hills or fields. In short, it is all those places that children themselves define as *zanka*. It is a meeting place, where the boundaries are determined by age and gender, where socio-cognitive learning occurs. Parents feel that the *zanka* experience is important so that children can let go of their mothers' apron strings and can learn values, such as caring for each other and for oneself. It is a special place, no adults, but still close by (Mekideche, 1998). In comparison, a child's presence on the street in industrialised and motorised society is often interpreted as a sign of neglect. Observations in the field and conversations with the parties involved have taught us that a child playing in the street is the expression of a concept of childhood, of childrearing and of the child's place in society.

Both the *zanka* and the exclusive mother-child relationship are examples of looking at other cultures through western lenses, and how quickly, through this ethnocentrism, an incomplete hypothesis can be reached. This incomplete hypothesis is exemplified in the words of Aminatta Forna (1999): 'If the families would only be more like us, then their (and our) problems would all be solved.' But let us first see what we can learn from research on subgroups in Belgium and the Netherlands as it pertains to practice in childcare.

The first striking conclusion that comes up in nearly all the research is that there are, indeed, major differences within the groups that were studied. There are both traditional and modern values, as well as a mixture of both. Swyngedouw et al's (1999), calls this 'value pluralism': one can have extremely traditional values in one area and modern ones in another so that it is nearly impossible to define value profiles, such as those that appeared in the research of the 1960s and 1970s. Pels states, for example that:

> ***Ultimately, every family is unique in its combination of orientation patterns, views and practices with respect to childrearing. A mother could speak both Dutch and Berber at home, have a Moroccan circle of friends,***

> ***prefer that her children associate mainly with the indigenous population, be active at school, protest against the 'normlessness' of the Dutch, raise her children democratically and send them to the Mosque to learn Arabic and the Koran. (Pels, 1998)***

Lesthaeghe's research also shows a large diversity within each group. A multitude of factors have been found to explain this: education, country of origin, the place of residence in Belgium, the generation, gender, and religion (Lesthaeghe, 1997). Even then, Nijsten concludes that, as far as Turkish families are concerned:

> ***In certain respects, we have not been particularly successful in explaining the differences in the childrearing behaviour of the parents. By that, we mean that very little connection has been discovered with the generation and the education of the parents. (Nijsten, 1998)***

A study of lesbian parents has shown that there are no differences at all in any of the aspects studied – for example, family relationships, gender role behaviour of the child, and so on – between lesbian parents and a control group consisting of heterosexual couples who have also conceived a child through donor insemination (Brewaeys, 1997). It seems, therefore, that traditional expectations (for example, that boys reared by lesbian parents suffer role confusion due to the lack of male role models) are based on prejudices rather than on reality (Hoogsteder & Bakx, 1998).[99] The only research that showed a fairly homogeneous picture was that done on a group of Chinese parents.

A second noticeable trend in nearly all the research is that the hiatus with the past that characterises western families also appears among most of the subgroups that were studied. Pels (1998) noted: 'The primary conclusion of the study could be that childrearing in modern Moroccan families is strongly characterised by change. This applies within the generations as well as between the successive generations. …' Within the context of interaction with their children, mothers of Moroccan origin are creating a new kind of existence that takes into account both what they learned at home and alternatives offered by the society that they are slowly coming to see as their own. Thus, we can talk about the creation of a new existence (Pels, 1998). Nijsten (1998) concurs,

arguing that the majority of parents of Turkish origin contemplate change with respect to the past, so that they act in a less authoritarian manner and pay more attention to their children.

Apart from changing childrearing values, the desire for children in itself is undergoing fundamental change. From a study on family planning and the use of contraceptives, for example, it appears that Turkish and Moroccan families in Belgium with more than two children will be exceptions in the future (Page & Segaert, 1997).[100] As far as Surinamese-Creole families are concerned, Distelbrink (1998) comes to the same conclusion:

> ***One important conclusion is that Surinamese-Creole childrearing is characterised by change. In their views, experience and practice, Creole mothers are starting to resemble native Dutch parents. Although Creole mothers are partly influenced by the Dutch situation which they and their children deal with on a day-to-day basis, the childrearing that occurs in Dutch families is not a goal for many of them. They believe in change, but also in continuity … Many mothers have succeeded in finding a successful combination of their well-known (traditional) elements and the new, more modern ones. (Distelbrink, 1998)***

The result of the study among Somali refugee families indicates the same trend towards change (Bouwmeester *et al*, 1998). The only exception to this rule was, once again, the Chinese families who were studied. These results were more finely shaded:

> ***The first conclusion could be that Chinese mothers are searching for a balance between continuity and change in which, as yet, the accent strongly favours continuity. Nonetheless, even the Chinese mothers argue that there is a big difference between how they themselves were raised and how they raise their children, even though traditional values – such as xiao[101] – are still the most clearly articulated in this group (Geense & Pels, 1998).***

One important drawback to the studies mentioned above is that they did not deal with the family as a system, but solely with the mother: those involved were nearly exclusively women. The researchers provide, therefore, a good and well-

balanced image of the mothers, but the fathers are hardly visible. If, therefore, the following text appears to be primarily about the mothers, this is certainly not a question of principle, but simply because of the information available. To redress this imbalance, the relationship between childcare and fathers will be explicitly discussed in the following chapters.

The implications of the changing family situations on educators

What can educators conclude from these studies? One immediate conclusion is that they will face an increasing diversity of families in the future. They will not only have to deal with differences in family structure, but also with an increasing number of subgroups who, traditionally, hardly used the childcare system but are now beginning to do so. Educators will have to take into account the fact that many frames of reference are disappearing. There is no longer such a thing as a 'typical' Turkish or 'typical' working class way of raising and educating children. Therefore, there is no longer a frame of reference which educators can fall back on. This does not apply only to the non-western subgroups of immigrants of ethnic minorities, but also to other subgroups, such as different social classes. Thus, for example, while it appears that the man-woman division of labour within the family is discussed in a more egalitarian manner among the better educated, in practice, one sees that fathers among the less well educated workers actually participate much more than middle class fathers or those in management positions (Ferri & Smith, 1996).

This does not mean that there are no more group-bound differences in mothering and fathering roles. It also does not mean that it would not be useful for educators to have some knowledge of culture-bound differences in childrearing. A basic knowledge can, in fact, prevent gross misunderstandings concerning, for example, religious dietary regulations which must, in accordance with the Convention for the Rights of the Child, be respected. It does mean, however, that one cannot assume that family X of group Y will think in a particular way and will have a particular way of relating to their children. Indeed, considering a parent only as a member of a particular group is to restrict that parent to that group's image. This image – as we have learned from all these studies – will rarely mesh with reality, because it is more inclined to be based on the past than on the present or future. Individuals accentuate or

weaken cultural characteristics, or even discard them, and groups have their own dynamic of change (Verbunt, 1994).

However, when one assumes that educators should learn about other cultures, other problems arise. One is: how do we do that? We often see in institutions that parents or colleagues from ethnic minorities are asked to tell something 'about their culture'. Educators often do not realise how difficult this is to answer. What do we do when we have learned about the Turkish, Moroccan and Surinam cultures and then a family from Bolivia or the Australian bush comes along? (Verbunt, 1996) There is the question of what to do with the information.

One plus one is three

The frames of reference are, therefore, at least partially lost. It is true that when the traditional networks, norms and values are lost, the insecurity of the educator increases. At the same time, this new, post-modern situation offers interesting perspectives. The professional educator should meet each parent again and should continue to wonder about this person: what does he or she stand for; what choices has his or her family made for the children; where do his or her priorities lie; and what does he or she want our priorities to be? This meeting is more individual oriented than group oriented, but it is carried out in the realisation that both the educator and the parent belong to certain groups which, as it were, are observers during these discussions.

Therefore, it is important not to bring too many assumptions about the other to these discussions. An open attitude and a willingness to question one's own norms is much more important than knowledge about cultural groups. What we are willing to ask is more important than what we know about the other. There is a lot to ask when the frames of references disappear. The first meeting could begin with the question: 'Who in this family is coming to meet us?' It is certainly no longer the case that this is automatically the mother and the father. It can be one person, or two or more, such as in Latin America's *comadre* or the Arabic El Ayla.[102]

A useful outline that helps us understand this complexity is the model that Super and Harkness (see Pels 1998) have developed which also supplies the theoretical framework for the Dutch studies commissioned by the PCOI, which

were briefly discussed earlier. This outline looks at education and childrearing within three inter-related subsystems, each of which is embedded in a broader cultural and ecological context. The first subsystem is *educational goals*. These are the values, cultural views or the 'parental ethnotheories' which are often a result of the personal mix of various influences. The second subsystem is *educational practice*. This deals with concrete behaviour in numerous educational situations, such as the dilemmas and doubts that were listed at the beginning of this chapter. The third subsystem is the *family environment*. This deals with the social and material situation of the family.

Each of the subsystems interacts with various aspects of the broader context and is, therefore, susceptible to change more or less independently of the other two. Still, there is a certain interaction between the three subsystems: when the differences become too great, a mechanism is activated to restore the balance. If change is introduced via one subsystem (for example, the admittance of girls to formal education), one or more of the subsystems will eventually adapt (for example, changing views and/or practices with respect to gender-specific education) (Pels, 1998).

It is not only families that can be regarded in terms of subsystems. Childcare institutions can also be seen in this way. The first subsystem here is about the *mission* or the *educational philosophy* of the institution. The second is the *educational practice* which aims to realise the mission. The third subsystem is the *material and social environment*: the neighbourhood where one is rooted, the means at one's disposal, and so on. Within the institution, there is also a dynamic which causes a change in the other subsystems to restore the balance whenever one of the three subsystems changes sufficiently. When, for example, the users of the institution change, this causes changes in the educational practices which, in turn, cause the institution to adjust its mission. It also works the other way around, when, for example, a service for family daycare providers or a daycare centre changes its mission towards a more socially-oriented policy, aimed at dealing with diversity and fighting discrimination. In this case, the educational practices and the material environment will change.

The meeting between parent and institution can be regarded as an event where two systems influence and change each other. The meeting and the dialogue can

concentrate on the first subsystem (the *mission)* but will, in its day-to-day dealings, perhaps have more to do with the second subsystem (*educational practice*) which is, nevertheless, closely connected to the other two. This vision characterises the work of the French *crèches parentales*, mentioned earlier in the book, where the educator starts from scratch when building a relationship with each of the parents and tries to find a compromise between the educational practices of the parent and those of the institution. This meeting, according to Lejeune and Blanc (1998)[103], can result in the development of four different practices:

One plus one is zero. The initial contact has taken place but no agreement has been found; the parent and the institution part company and the child does not enter the institution.

One plus one is one. The parent has been told what the institution does; the institution advises the parent on the best way to handle the situation; and the family adjusts to the culture of the institution. Influence is unilateral in the direction from the institution to the parent.

One plus one is two. In this case, the meeting will lead to a dialogue but neither of the systems is changed by it. The institution continues the same practices, as does the family. The child will have to manage between two worlds where there are no real bridges.

One plus one is three. In this case, the two systems influence each other. From the dialogue between family and institution, the differences in method, mission and environment are determined, discussed and negotiated, resulting in new practices that were not previously present at the institution or within the family (Lejeune & Blanc, 1998).

Needless to say, it is this last model that we find the most important, and it is this model that our educational project takes into account.

The dialogue

The practices mentioned above allow us to look more closely at the dialogue between parent and educator. If there is a large gulf between the educational and

childrearing practices at the institution and at home, there will have to be a dialogue, a negotiation. Because in a diversity approach the respect for the individual is of paramount concern, this dialogue will be characterised by reciprocity and a desire to move gradually in the right direction. Language use could be one example. Should one of the goals of a childcare centre be to help children with different first languages learn the dominant language well enough to be able to function well in kindergarten, the centre will act as a 'passageway' between the private and the public domain. However, the submersion of the children in the dominant language can be seen by the children as a request to reject their first language. If there is no reciprocity and respect, the children may feel this as a threat to their home environment. In these cases, the institution will have to search for ways to express its respect for the children's language. At the same time, the centre will need to consult the parents in order to work out the best way that the family can demonstrate respect for the daycare centre's language.

Verbunt's (1999) definition of 'negotiation' can be an inspiration: negotiation is a dialogue between two or more parties in which each party attempts to hold onto the elements essential to it, and is prepared to make concessions in those areas that are secondary. This means that the dialogue is more inclined to take place at the level of the second subsystem (educational practices) and that one will attempt to steer the discussion away from the first subsystem (the mission, the values). It is, after all, very difficult to negotiate principles. Research on norms and values in various subgroups in the society has shown that there are rarely *opposite* norms and values. The old contrast, for example, between the values of individual development and autonomy on the one hand, and obedience and respect on the other, is a fable. However, what is certain is that different values receive different places in the personal hierarchy; that one person attaches more importance to them than another person does. On top of this, there can be a difference of opinion concerning how a specific value is expressed *in practice*. This is why I advocate negotiating the *practice* of childrearing and education instead of the educational *principles*. A *pragmatic* approach is called for here.

Based on her many years of experience in a crèche parentale in an underprivileged district outside Lyon, Blanc (1994) offers the following pragmatic guidelines and suggestions concerning dialogue.

Ensure quality childcare

This is the primary, self-evident condition for dialogue. Listening to what the parent asks; being able to hear the question both over the telephone and during registration; listening to a complaint; being interested in and curious about the background of the parent, and so on are important aspects of that quality. Asking questions without interrogating is, according to Blanc, an important skill. Curiosity and interest in other viewpoints are, perhaps, important preconditions for a dialogue for those involved in family daycare provision, daycare centres and kindergartens.

Communication

The policy of the institution on dealing with diversity should be clearly supported and articulated. This means, among other things, that differences should be talked about. There are many ways in which an institution can achieve this. One is to write this policy into the educational philosophy of the institution. This way, it will also be communicated to the parents. As an example, below is a text taken from the parents' brochure of the students' daycare services of the University of a Ghent (see Cornelissens) daycare centre:

> *… in our daycare centre your child will come into contact with children of various ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds. Respect and openness for all these different backgrounds is of primary importance. Equality is the key word. Research has shown that young children quickly notice differences and are also quick to make value judgements about them. This diversity includes differences in origin, skin colour, gender, religion, abilities, age and weight. In our daycare centre, we consider it our duty to educate the children to be without prejudice, in an atmosphere of trust, tolerance and openness. Starting in infancy, we strive to achieve this by paying attention to the child's identity and by giving him or her an opportunity to develop a positive self-image. We would like to have photographs of you and your family to show the other children and so that each child can tell us where he or she comes from, who he or she belongs to, and who he or she is so that each child can be proud of his or her background. We let the children listen to all sorts of music that each child brings from home. The books and puzzles that we buy are checked to prevent stereotype representations of people … In order to develop a positive self-image, children need mirrors:*

people like them who are worthwhile resembling and with whom they can identify.

Building bridges and forging ties

In an institution, it is the task of those in authority to bring people in contact with each other, to systematically introduce people to each other and then to help them get along. Those in authority also need the ability to withdraw from a situation. Building bridges means that one does not only identify differences, but also similarities. For example, the educator could say 'Look, Mrs X, this mother also had problems a few months ago getting her daughter to sleep. Maybe it would help to talk to her about it.' In a daycare centre, care for the children is shared. For Hoffmann & Arts (1994), the first consideration on the communication on cultural differences is the assumption that, in spite of all the differences, the same sorts of human and social problems must be solved in every society. Every human being has the same basic needs, and education is one of them.

Finding and appreciating each other's competencies

In order to give each parent a place in the institution, he or she is invited to carry out a task that is in keeping with his or her abilities. The parents' commitment will thus be seen and appreciated. This is Hoffmann and Arts' second consideration in which they argue that people should be treated as meaningfully as possible in their own environment; and that it should be assumed that people are reasonably competent, whatever their backgrounds may be.

Do not generalise

This fundamental attitude means, according to Blanc (1994), that educators do not make themselves the focal point; that they develop the ability to listen to the diversity of parents, without being blinded by their own cultural frame of reference. This concept closely resembles David Pinto's *double perspective*: the skill to be able to look at a situation from two different angles. Pinto suggests that, in order to do this, educators should first become acquainted with their own norms and values, and then try to find out what exactly the 'strange' behaviour of the other means in its proper context. Only then will they be able to ask themselves how they will deal with this behaviour (Pinto, 1994).[104] The ability to take in this double perspective is one of the most important skills that an educator can have.

The story *Tin Tin in Tibet*, which was discussed in Chapter Three 'The Other', movingly symbolises this double perspective. From the beginning, the reader experiences the whole story through the eyes of the young hero Tin Tin: we see his fears, his loneliness and his persistence in freeing his friend Chang from the Yeti, The Abominable Snowman.[105] In the climax of the story, we see that the fear of the Yeti was actually a fear within himself. The story ends with a final drawing, sketched from the perspective of the Yeti, so that the reader suddenly sees the whole story from this other perspective. The reader, through the Yeti's eyes, sees Tin Tin's caravan slowly pull away. The skill of *se décentrer* ('de-centring') can be summarised as the skill to follow the *View of the Yeti*.

Being empathetic and non-discriminatory does not mean that one cannot set boundaries and take a stand.[106] The individual wishes of the parents can be taken into account to the degree that there is a common frame of reference for the institution.

Communication

It is nearly impossible not to deal with others ethnocentrically, judging people from our own frame of reference.[107] For example, an educator asks a parent to come a bit earlier the next evening in order to discuss her child's sleeping problems. The mother agrees but does not turn up. The educator interprets this as a lack of respect. Every individual thinks in the codes of his or her culture as if they were universal: it is the other party who is 'strange'. A gesture, a silence or an expression do not mean the same thing in every culture; every subgroup can have different codes that are learned and passed on through socialisation. Every member of a subgroup can interpret these effortlessly, but they are 'illegible' to an outsider. It is absolutely not a given, for example, that 'yes' in one culture means the same as 'yes' in another.

To give a personal anecdote, when I was a teenager, one of my best friends was Dutch. If I was at his house and his father offered me something to drink, I always answered 'No, thank you'. That is what I had learned. You refused the first time out of politeness. The host then offers a second or a third time and only then do you accept. It always surprised me that the father simply accepted my 'No, thank you', and I wasn't offered anything else for the rest of the evening. This is one example of many. Behaviour is also subject to 'culture coding'. For

163

example, a study of the non-verbal behaviour of couples in a café has shown that there appear to be large differences in how often the partners touch each other. In Puerto Rico, this turned out to be 180 times per hour; in Paris, 110 times per hour; and in London, 0 times per hour. (Khoshkhesal 1996).

In addition to the content of communication, the relationship between the speakers and listeners must be taken into account. For example, a nod can indicate, 'I am not in a position to say "no" to you', while a 'yes' can say something about how I see myself, how I see the other person and how I see our relationship. The implications of the relationship in communication generally pass unconsciously, and as it can be ambiguous, it is generally here where misunderstandings occur. A question from the educator such as, 'Shall I show you the best way to give Kimberly a bottle?' expresses something irrefutable about how the educator sees herself – competent and professional – how she sees the mother – not competent, but prepared to let me teach her – and how she sees the relationship – I am in the position that I have something to teach her. If the mother does, indeed, see herself as less competent than the educator, this communication can work, but it is understandable that the statement by this educator can cause all sorts of misconceptions that are often called *the battle of perspectives* (de Vriendt *et al*, 1985). This battle of perspectives can become more intense when both parties have a 'support system' behind them

In a heterogeneous world, in which educators increasingly deal with parents from subgroups other than their own, the chance of a battle of perspectives is greater, and is made even more so because of relational hierarchy and non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication is seldom clear:[108] how much personal space should there be between two partners in a conversation; are there different body languages; how loud should one talk; is it acceptable to touch the other person; and so on. This is all behaviour for which there are no clear rules and which is, therefore, susceptible to a great deal of misunderstanding.

Nevertheless, experts argue that non-verbal communication determines 75 percent of the message. In cases where the message is to arouse sympathy or trust, it is even as much as 93 percent (Hoffman & Arts, 1994). If there is a difference in message between the verbal and the non-verbal, people tend to pick up on the non-verbal. For example, when an educator first welcomes a

parent to the daycare centre, says 'Welcome' and shakes his or her hand, but at the same time, looks in the other direction, the parent will be more inclined to remember the non-verbal message.

Know yourself

One important condition for dealing with ethnocentrism is to know yourself well. Self-knowledge enables us to not make hasty judgements when we are surprised by unusual reactions (Verbunt, 1994). Parents can be extremely shocked if they feel that certain norms, values and customs which are very different from theirs, are taken for granted. Their own values and customs, after all, are a part of their family identity and the disapproval of them is seen as a serious rejection (de Vriendt *et al*, 1985). In practice, ignoring certain parental concerns can lead to a spiral of mutual rejection. For example, parents of disabled children are often considered to be overprotective. The educator who unconsciously has this stereotypical image may be more inclined to interpret their questions and concerns as meddling in his or her territory and may dismiss them. The parents may react by making more emphatic demands in order to be heard, which results in even more rejection and dismissal.

It is important that parents be heard, as studies have shown that there is a positive correlation between the degree to which parents make demands on the institution, and the development of their child. One example that we came across was when a mother of Indian origin expressed concern about her baby's feeding pattern. She insisted that her baby be given a 120 ml bottle every two hours. The educator realised that the baby did not need so much and also would not take it. She tried to reassure the mother that her baby was drinking enough. During the next few weeks, the relationship between the mother and the educator worsened. The mother continued to insist that the educator force her daughter to take a bottle every two hours, while the educator continued to try to reassure her by saying that the child was drinking enough, and that it was her first priority to look after the health of the child. The physician who worked with the childcare centre used a growth curve to show the mother there was no problem, but the mother's anxiety, and the gap between the mother and the educator only increased. The more the educator tried to tell the mother that nothing was wrong, the more the mother felt that her concerns were not being taken seriously and the more anxious she became. The more the mother

expressed her anxiety, the more the educator tended to brush aside the concerns. Their mutual rejection had begun.

This problem was solved when the distress of the mother was heard and her competence with respect to her baby was recognised. The educator asked the mother to show her how she fed the baby at home, and the educator showed the mother how she fed the child – and how she stopped when it was clear that the child had had enough. The intention here was that, together, they could agree on a practice that was viable both at home and at the daycare centre; one that respected both the concern of the mother and the educator. From this conversation, it became clear that the child hardly ate at home, which was the reason that the mother felt that it was so important that the daycare centre was meticulous about feeding. These conversations, together with the support of the physician, resulted in a new practice. While this was different and more meticulous than the educator would have done on her own, it was much less intensive than the mother had originally demanded. Throughout the course of the conversation, the focus moved from bottle feeding to other types of food on the advice of the physician and others, so that a new practice was developed. It was especially important that the mother felt that her concerns were shared, and that the danger of a sort of competition about 'who knows best' was averted.

In addition to getting to know oneself, it is also important to get to know the other person. There are a great number of resources which help 'learn' about other cultures. Once more though, we stress that educators should not consider information about groups as irrefutable; such information should be used solely to steer one in a general direction and must be put into perspective. Every bit of information will have to be continually reviewed whenever one meets an individual from another subgroup. In their handbook on intercultural communication, Hoffman and Arts (1994) argue that all too often cultural information is used (or misused) to explain the behaviour of a unique individual. The pitfall is clear: stereotyping. We must not approach anyone as a representative of their ethnic group, but as unique individuals with their own subjective opinions. If we do not do this, we short-change not only the other person, but also ourselves.

It is, perhaps, much more interesting to retain spontaneity in the meeting (Hoffman & Arts, 1994). A meeting between an educator and a parent is, after

all, not primarily a meeting between two cultures, but a meeting *between* two individuals. Group differences do exist, but individual differences *within* every group are so important that the differences between the groups lose their relevance. And it is vital for educators to take this into account. One of the conclusions of this chapter is that there is a hiatus between the past and the present with respect to parenthood. This change is reflected in general social conditions, such as family structure, and in norms and values. It applies to dominant groups as well as to minority groups. This dynamic and this heterogeneity should characterise the meeting.

Notes

87. By 'family', we mean those persons who care for the child. In a traditional western conception, these are generally the parents, while in other subgroups, it could just as easily be other family members.

88. Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy (1920) founded the famous Department of Family Psychiatry at the Eastern Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute (1957) and the American Family Therapy Association. His insights were influenced both by the psychodynamic insights based on the individual and by the systemic, transactional direction of thinking (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1994). This American therapist of Hungarian origin has convincingly demonstrated, with his contextual therapy and his theoretical work, that the key to a great deal of further development lies in this feeling of loyalty. His work is a key reference when dealing with children and their families.

89. The second part of 'If I weren't so nice', which was understood, but never spoken aloud, was: 'you'd be sorry.'

90. This small example is only about one limited aspect in the style of childrearing that, of course, does not give an accurate picture of the whole. My father did not only have huge arguments, he also had very gentle ones.

91. According to Ventimiglia's analysis, modern fathers are searching for new models because they want to separate themselves from models of the past. Other authors also clearly point out this hiatus (Peeters & Vandenbroeck, 1998b). The fact that fatherhood itself has no history makes it all the more difficult to deal with the current breach of this trend. This lack of history is apparent from the fact that the first written contribution on the positive role of the father did not appear until Lamb (1976). Twenty years later, a third edition has been published (Lamb, 1997). In the second edition in 1981, he had already argued that there was no connection between the says in which fathers and sons interpret 'masculinity'. We forgot, after all, to ask the crucial question Lamb asks, 'Why should boys want to be like their fathers?'

92. There are six formal criteria: monthly income, education, development of the children, work situation of the parents, housing and health.

93. Dr. Ron Lesthaeghe is Professor of Sociology and Demography at the Free University in Brussels. Kris Deschouwer is Professor of Political Science at the Free University in Brussels and the University of Bergen (Norway).

94. Programmerings College Onderzoek Jeugd, (PCOJ – Programming College for Youth Research) was incorporated into the Stichting Jeugdinformatie Nederland (Dutch Foundation for Youth Information) in 1996.

95. Trees Pels is employed at the Institute for Sociological-Economic Research at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. For many years, she has been doing research on childrearing and education among families belonging to minority groups.

96. John Bowlby (1907-1990) a London psychiatrist, was the father of the theory of attachment. In 1947, he published 'Maternal Care and Mental Health' for the World Health Organisation. This instigated a whole series of research projects and publications on the mother-child bond. Selma Freiberg is primarily known for her book, published in 1959, on the magical world of toddlers and pre-schoolers, 'The Magic Years'.

97. Forna's ideas are supported by Nelson Mandela, who, in his autobiography, 'The Long Road to Freedom' (1995), writes: 'We do not make the same distinction among blood relatives as westerners do. We have no half-brothers or half-sisters. The sister of my mother is my mother, the son of my uncle is my brother, the child of my brother is my son or daughter'.

98. Her statement is typical: *'Il faut toujours être trois pour que naisse un enfant'* ('There needs to be three for a baby to be born') (Liaudet, 1998). Nonetheless, it should be said that there is currently also a wave forming that questions ethnocentric assumptions and takes cultural frames of reference into account, such as ethnopsychoanalysis in France (see, for example, the organisation Demeter, and the writing of Ondongh-Essalt, 1998) or the activities of the Dutch Psychoanalytic Institute in Amsterdam with regard to multicultural society (van Waning, 1999), in which, for example, psychologists and anthropologists inspire each other.

99. Very little research is available on male homosexual parents. An impressive research review published by Michael E. Lamb, summarises the only American study on 'gay

fathers'. The review appears to refute all the existing stereotypes, such as that children of homosexuals have more of a tendency to become homosexuals themselves; that they have problems with their sexual identity; or that they are more at risk of being abused. The only particular difference that these studies show is that children of homosexual fathers have to struggle more with discriminatory remarks from their environment (Patterson & Chan, 1997).

100. According to Page and Segaert, the sharp decline in the birth rate runs parallel to the same decline in the mother countries, Turkey and Morocco. Trends in the use of contraceptives also run parallel. It is, therefore, not simply the case that these developments are an 'adjustment to the Belgian situation'.

101. *Xiao* is the complete set of obligations that children owe their parents, which includes harmony in relationships with others; correct manners; the proper forms of getting on with others; modesty; industriousness; shame; purity; and also achievements at school and in society (Geense & Pels, 1998).

102. *El Ayla* is an Arabic term that has two definitions. In the first, it is the family community, the extended family of several *families* which all live together under one roof. In the second definition, it refers to a family who lives with others with that extended family. If you ask a man how his *Ayla* is, you are asking about both his family and his children as well as about the *Ayla*, where he lives with his parents and other relatives. The word *Ayla* refers to a community spirit that cannot be narrowed down to the Western concept of nuclear family. With respect to childrearing, it refers to a communal and shared responsibility for the children, which is sometimes called 'shared motherhood'. Everyone takes part in childrearing according to gender and age: father, mother, brother, sister, grandparents, and so on (Taleb, 1996).

103. Maryse Lejeune is a social worker, specialising in intercultural childcare at ACEPP in Paris. Marie-Claude Blanc worked for many years as the person in charge of a *crèche parentale* in an underprivileged neighbourhood outside of Lyon, France and is now employed at ACEPP Rhône-Alpes.

104. Pinto calls this the 'Three-Step Method' to achieve intercultural communication. Dr David Pinto is the Director of the Inter-Cultural Institute in Groningen, the Netherlands.

170

105. The concept of the 'Abominable Snowman' is a Western concept, introduced in the 1920s by Europeans (in particular, by Henry Newman), who had never seen the Snowman. The Tibetans do not know of this concept. They only know the concept *tépo*, 'wild men', which they gave to those who lived on the edge of society, those who refused to conform. 'In this respect, a free thinker in our society could easily be labelled a *tépo* in Tibet,' according to Alexandra David-Neel, who studied and wrote about the phenomenon in the 1930s (van Nieuwenborgh, 1994). According to van Nieuwenborgh, there are reliable indications that Hergé was acquainted with David-Neel's work when he developed 'Tin Tin in Tibet'.

106. In our experience, there is a risk that educators who deal with diversity no longer dare to set boundaries, and feel that they must accept everything on order to avoid being accused of discrimination. Ultimately, this attitude leads to a dilution of educational practices and the burn-out of the educator. As was said in Chapter Four 'The Meeting', daycare provides a golden opportunity to close the gap between the fragmentation caused by only taking the individual into account, and the rigidity of a system that only takes the group norm into account. Differentiation should still be made between tolerance and permissiveness: tolerance is clearly a moral commitment, permissiveness tends to be amoral. Tolerance is based on respect. Permissiveness is based on indifference (Raes, 1997). This book's plea for tolerance and respect, is not a plea for the blurring of moral standards: it is precisely the opposite.

107. A well-known and hilarious example of ethnocentric communication is the introduction of the 'Ford Pinto' in Latin America. The car that had sold well in the United States, got nowhere there. If the company had not been so convinced of the car's universal applicability, they would have done some market research on the name. They would then have discovered that *pinto*, which is a type of horse in North America, is used to indicate a tiny penis in Spanish speaking Latin America (Pinto, 1994).

108. This is why, in system-theoretical literature, non-verbal communication is often called the *analog* language, in contrast to the unambiguous *digital* language of verbal communication.

172

Chapter seven

Parents about the house

We began the previous chapter by indicating how important mutual loyalty is between the parent[109] and child, how respect for the child's identity is inevitably linked to the respect for the parent's individuality. In saying this, it also becomes clear that both the institution and the family are systems with their own norms, practices and circumstances. The skills of the educator are thus crucial when both systems meet. The institution can become transitional space – fulfilling the role as the bridge between the family and society. Childcare is right in the middle of this transitional space and therefore, is itself at the point at which the dilemma occurs: children need continuity and the sense of security that comes from family warmth; at the same time, they must leave the family and enter society.

It is an illusion to think that family security is the only requirement for childrearing. In the first instance, not every family can offer this, in which case the institution can play an important role, as long as it is able to provide the needed security. Another instance is that it is in the interest of socialisation that the tight child-family relationship be broken, and the child guided outwards and enabled to function in a diverse society. While the daycare centre fits perfectly in this transitional territory, it can only help children with socialisation within the boundaries set by their parents. As this is occurring in the context of a society in which the family is more isolated than in the past, while education and childrearing are becoming more regulated, with the State playing an ever-increasing role, this becomes a real paradox. This paradox can only be solved in a daycare centre in which parents themselves occupy a major role, and in which the educator is an intermediary, a negotiator.

Chapter Four 'The Meeting', looked at how a childcare centre should avoid concentrating on simply reproducing existing social values, and the existing unequal division of privileges among the various cultures and subgroups. This would be suicidal in present-day society which is evolving so quickly, according to ethnopsychologist Jean Biarnès (1999). While this may be true, the educational institution must avoid concentrating solely on individual differences without setting its own values and social and educational philosophy. This would lead to identity fragmentation. To keep this precarious balance, dialogue with each family is essential.

In this chapter, these insights are applied to three areas of practice: the enrolment of children with their families, the *intake policy*; the first contact between the institution and the family, or the *adjustment policy*; and finally, the daily contact between the family and family daycare provider, the daycare centre or the school (the *parent policy*). In this chapter, the emphasis will primarily be on the youngest children.

The Matthew effect

We have talked about the special place that childcare institutions have as the bridge between the private and the public domain; the first place where children are confronted with society's diversity. The first questions to arise are self-evident: is the educational institution an accurate representation of the society? Is the institution an accurate representation of the neighbourhood, district or city in which it is situated? This is, in reality, often not the case.

Studies from the Centre of Social Policy at the University of Antwerp conducted on nearly 4,000 families indicated that it is primarily the higher income groups which use childcare – no less than 60 percent of families with children younger than three years old, while they comprise only 36 percent of the population (Storms, 1995). Conversely, only 20 percent of the families with the lowest incomes, which comprise 41 percent of the population, request childcare. Of the low-income families who do request childcare, only a small number are unemployed as work is a necessity for staying above the poverty line. Research has clearly shown that the lower numbers of less well educated women who work, do not sufficiently explain the difference in the use of childcare, and therefore the social inequality that is present at daycare.

This is why this study talks about the 'Matthew effect' in childcare. The term is inspired by the Bible's gospel according to Matthew, chapter 13, verse 12: '*For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.*' What is meant here is that a social service, in this case childcare, works to the advantage of the socially privileged. Part of the explanation can be found in the cost of childcare, which is a bigger burden for families with the smallest budgets. However, research has shown that while this might be the case for families with one child, it is not the case for families with more children, because Flanders has a system in which the parental contribution is strongly based on family income and takes into account the number of children in the family. The reason for this Matthew effect must, therefore be sought elsewhere.

We have found that the way childcare is currently organised presents a number of barriers for families from the lowest socio-economic groups and those from ethnic minorities (Peeters & Vandenbroeck, 1993). Childcare centres and family daycare providers often have too little knowledge of specific target groups and are, therefore – often unconsciously – geared towards the 'average' family, even though this 'average' family is slowly becoming a thing of the past. One barrier is that many childcare centres expect the parents to plan the child's arrival at daycare months in advance, wading through administrative steps and forms and putting their child's name on a waiting list. For a family in a precarious work situation, these are extremely difficult requirements to fulfil. How can parents register their child six months to a year in advance when they do not know if one of them will have a job next week, and if they do, what hours they will be working? Another request is that parents, upon registration, decide which daily periods the child will be attending. This is necessary for efficient scheduling at the daycare centre, or the family daycare provider's time, and is also necessary for group continuity, an aspect that has gained increasing importance in educational circles.[110] But this, too, is difficult for those who have work one week and no work for the rest of the month, or who have different shifts.

Thus, well-meaning educational motives have unintentional social side-effects. One of these side-effects is that unemployed families have more trouble finding childcare and, therefore, remain unemployed. The fact that ethnic minorities are often in precarious work situations is, perhaps, one of the factors that explains

their under representation in daycare. In the Netherlands, similar trends are sometimes magnified by the large influence that the business community has on daycare, in which they often reserve places for their employees. Several authors have been saying for years that, in both Belgium and the Netherlands, some groups are manifestly underrepresented (for example, van Keulen *et al*, 1991; Pot, 1994).

Another barrier can simply lie in the fact that the notices advertising the daycare centre or service are unconsciously geared more towards certain groups than others. Thus, we found that some families of Turkish origin who lived in the centre of Ghent, used childcare and day-and-night crisis care outside the city, because they did not know the daycare situation in their own neighbourhood. This can happen when an institution disseminates its information in one language in a multi-lingual neighbourhood, and does not cooperate with neighbourhood organisations.

Alongside these 'hard' factors, there are also 'soft' factors that have more to do with the educational institution's culture. Generally speaking, these deal with the norms and values that an institution projects and which give some families the message that the particular institution 'is not for them'. Thus, an African-Belgian mother, whose child regularly goes to a childcare centre in Antwerp, said: 'Many of our brothers and sisters are afraid to come here. They think that this is only for Belgians and not for Africans'.[111] In the VBJK's MEQ project we saw that the enrolment of ethnic minorities increased when staff from ethnic minorities were employed. Thus, we observed how a Turkish-Belgian woman, having been involved in the MEQ project, registered at another agency for family daycare providers and stimulated an influx of children from ethnic minorities.

These factors contribute to the fact that these institutions seldom reflect the neighbourhood, district, city or region they are located in. This applies to a much lesser extent for kindergartens, which are used by nearly everyone: in Flanders, at any rate, nearly 100 percent of the three year olds (and even 80 percent from the age of 31 months) attend kindergarten (Buysse, 1999). Nonetheless, it is also true here that these schools do not always properly reflect their social environment because there are, alongside 'white' schools, also 'concentrated' schools (those composed almost entirely of immigrant children).

However, examples such as 'De Linde' in Antwerp indicate that this trend can also be broken with a thoughtful policy (Lanjri, 1998). All too often, in preschool, the assumption is that those who need childcare ask for it, and when certain groups don't ask as often or not at all, it is assumed that they don't need it, or need it less. Thus, educational institutions are often only geared to the demand of certain subgroups.

One good example of this is an inner-city daycare centre, situated in an underprivileged neighbourhood in Ghent (Vandenbroeck, 1998b). A few years ago, there were on average only six children attending. As a result, the municipal government wanted to close the centre because there was apparently no need for childcare there. However, more than a year later, the daycare centre was completely full and was even enlarged. Between these two extremes, a great deal of hard work was done to reach families through the creation of a thoughtful educational and social policy, which included close cooperation with neighbourhood organisations and ad hoc leaders (men as well as women) in the neighbourhood. The Ghent Pedagogical Guidance Centre was also included. The successful results indeed make it appear that the previous traditional childcare did not fulfil some needs and that people in the most vulnerable situations were the ones who were least well served. The team was assembled in a way that better reflected the target group (for example, educators from ethnic minorities were recruited); more time-flexible care was offered; communications – directly or via neighbourhood organisations – were improved; work was done with organisations which offered training courses for neighbourhood mothers, and so on.

These and other examples from Flanders and the Netherlands, show that the policy of the institutions themselves determines whether or not they reach their target group. ACEPP in France has also shown that a change in policy can result in reaching subgroups from the area around the childcare centre that had not previously been reached (Combes, 1991). In their daycare centres, which are run by parental management, they have managed to eliminate both 'hard' and 'soft' barriers as well as provide support to the parents in their parental roles. They did this through, among other things, making space available for emergency care as well as for occasional care. In order to maintain continuity, the number of occasionally attended places can be kept to a certain percentage, perhaps 10–15 percent.

The MEQ project also carried out an intentionally targeted recruitment effort in an inner-city childcare centre in Aalst, Belgium. This was a large centre that initially only attracted 'average' two-income, middle-class families, although it was situated close to a poorer neighbourhood with many ethnic minority families. However, after a concerted effort the number of children from the underprivileged neighbourhoods rose within a year as a result of multi-lingual communication; recruiting a Belgian-Turkish educator; working with key community figures (in this case a local integration centre, a neighbourhood committee; and an infant advice centre); the improving of the adjustment policy; linking with a motivated social worker who supported the team; and, especially, sending the message to the neighbourhood that the institution was prepared to take the diversity of childrearing practices into account. Several of the ethnic minority parents stated that, having felt comfortable enough to enrol their children, they were themselves able to follow a training course or further education, which they had not been able to pursue previously. However, the experience of this daycare centre also shows that a consistent policy pertaining to the entire institution is necessary to reach the desired families.

Before establishing an educational policy, each institution must first set up a *social policy* which addresses these three questions: who is this institution for?; is this institution only meant to help families reconcile work and care for children, or does it also have an education goal in itself?; do we have a social project for this neighbourhood? A social *mission* can arise from this discussion and this mission – at least partially – will influence the centre's educational philosophy and practice. This means for example, that recruiting family daycare providers should reflect the social mission and not vice versa. If we translate this into the terms of the system that we looked at in the previous chapter, this is an argument for establishing the first subsystem (the mission) from the third subsystem (the community), and from there for determining which educational practice (second subsystem) is the most suitable in order to achieve the goals under the given circumstances.

Therefore, it is not enough to hastily set up an educational philosophy and then wait to see who comes. It is probable that only part of the target group will be reached. If this is the case, opportunities for many children as well as the parents will be withheld. Opportunities for socialising the children and families, and

opportunities to broaden the educational environment are then lost. From this standpoint, childcare has become more about the right of children than simply the reconciliation between work and parenthood, as is stated by the Flemish Commissioner for Children's Rights (Vanderkerckhove, 1999).

VBJK has always held this view (Baekelmans, 1993). Within the particular context of this book, this right means the right of children to have the opportunity to develop their own identity and strong self-image; it allows the individual children to deal with diversity and to enrich themselves from it. This is assuming that children go to childcare. What about those children who do not go to childcare? Or those who are at a childcare centre that does not take diversity and personal growth into account? What about their rights? If the barriers are too high for the centre to reach some families, even those families that do attend will be short-changed as the centre will only offer a faulty image of reality and will not give the children the chance to learn to come to terms with the diversity that they will undoubtedly have to deal with in the future.

The intake policy – the first cut

It is now time to look at those parents who are reached by the educational institution. Between the parents' first meeting with the institution and the day that the child first attends the centre there is a crucial period. It is a period of meeting, of exploration, and of getting to know each other. It is also a crucial time for the children, as at no other time will the connection between the children and their family be so strong as when 'separation' is in sight.

Childcare must try to create the ideal circumstances in which to look after the children, and these circumstances are linked to their parents. In order to provide continuity with the home, the children are both the 'object' and the 'subject'. What is meant is that the carer should feed, wash, diaper and comfort the child in a similar manner to that of the parents. In this way, the carer or childcare centre becomes a *transitional space*, according to psychoanalyst Martine Le Strat (1997).

The first major separation between parent and child, when a child first leaves home and goes to a centre, is extremely important; it is not a fleeting or light-hearted event.[112] While it can be painful, it is an important period in the child's growth process. In spite of the pain, parents should realise that they are able to

enjoy themselves without their child, that they have the right to a separate life. Children can have fun with other children and adults, and therefore we must abandon the idea that children can only be happy with their parents. (Ben Soussan, 1999). The French paediatrician Samy Ramstein, who worked with Dolto for years, compares it to the launching of a submarine: certain steps must be taken to supervise the transition, and none of these can be skipped without consequences. If no provisions are made for an adjustment period, the quality of the child's life is in danger (Ramstein, 1989).

Inspired by Dolto's work on separation, the *Maison verte* (while literally meaning the 'green house', this name is derived from the original *Maison ouverte* – open house – which some of the children shortened to '*maison verte*'. Since then the name *Maison verte* has been used.) The primary function of these places was to offer support during the separation phase of parent and child. Very often, the counselling took the form of finding words to express what the parent and child were feeling. Children who have had major problems (aggression, excessive exhaustion, eating disorders, and so on) adjusting to traditional childcare, adjust much better after a period of regular visits to a Maison verte (Dolto, 1985). Their experience has shown that the transitional period should be handled with the greatest care and that young children are especially vulnerable during this adjustment period. This initiative has also been taken up in Belgium.

After a period of intensive togetherness during which the child has been the focal point of the family for a long time, the moment arrives when the child must enter society – often through the daycare centre or the kindergarten. This is why the socialising role of daycare centres demands respect and tolerance, and should be the model for the child's entrance into society. Before looking more closely at this entry, we should briefly look at some pivotal concepts.

In an extensively documented argument, University of Ghent Philosopher of Law and Ethics, Koen Raes, explains why tolerance is a difficult norm. All too often, tolerance is confused with permissiveness. Permissiveness, however, only occurs in educational institutions which see the child solely as the subject and adopt individualistic norms. At the other extreme, intolerance occurs when educational institutions only take into account the norms and values of the

dominant social majority (Bourdieu, 1993). Tolerance therefore, does not imply a lack of ethics; on the contrary, it means turning the conflict of values into an ethical issue. Raes argues that it is too easy to reduce tolerance to choices that one does not find so important. In fact, this tendency is often very strong. Cultural differences are reduced to recognisable economic variables, for example, the idea that if immigrants are given a roof over their heads they will forget about their religious beliefs and other convictions. This is possible, but it does not acknowledge that cultural differences are in a class of their own. We must accept that a choice we ourselves feel is morally significant, can lead – among others – to choices that are *also* significantly important *for them*. This is, moreover, not the same as a policy of tolerance, which is continually based on superiority instead of equality (Raes, 1997).

Most childcare centres have a clear adjustment policy, and its goal is often that the parent and child have to adjust to the institution. It is expected that they become acquainted with its customs and habits, and that, eventually, the necessary trust and respect will develop that will ease the transition. One or more visits by the parent and child before the actual care begins is part of the adjustment ritual. While this is undoubtedly essential, it is still insufficient. In the terms of the previous chapter, this is why 'one plus one is one' or 'one plus one is two' – it is about one-way traffic in which the family adapts to childcare, but where little can be seen of any movement in the other direction.

An ideal adjustment policy should be based on 'one plus one is three': a reciprocal process which has at least three steps. One, getting to know each others' customs and expectations; two, determining possible differences; and three, negotiating an approach. In practice, these steps can vary greatly depending on the type of institution. An adjustment policy in a childcare centre where young babies are cared for is very different from that of a kindergarten. In the case of family daycare providers, because the first meetings often take place at an agency while the care itself is in the daycare provider's home, the adjustment policy will again be different. Therefore, in the following chapter, we will limit ourselves to the most important general principles. Examples from childcare centres and challenges faced by agencies for family daycare providers are discussed, as they are the ones that generally work with the youngest children.

A policy of mutual adjustment

The first phase – exploring the situation

When parents and carers first meet, the first step is the careful exploration of each others' customs and expectations. The institution should talk about its mission, its practices and the circumstances in which it works. This will be easier if the institution has a well-considered educational and social policy. The institution should also introduce itself completely to the family and child, for example, by giving the parents and child a full tour of the care facility.

Ramstein, as mentioned previously, places great emphasis on this first meeting. He argues that as children have been socialised in the family, often by the mothers who have the children's complete trust, the educator must associate the institution with the mother. He recommends mothers visiting the institution several times with their children – however young they are – to tour it like a museum, so that they can point out various places: 'Look, Claude, here is the kitchen, here is the …' When doing this, the educators should also be called by their names. Even though the children might seem too young to understand all of this, they do need reassurance, as they will pick up on the mother's sadness and feel the strangeness of the new situation (Ramstein, 1989).

At the same time, the parents must be able to express their own expectations and concerns about the care (first subsystem). The differences between individuals within each subgroup mean that the carer cannot asume beforehand what a particular parent will find important. The educator will always have to talk to the parents to discover why they have chosen childcare, why they have chosen this type of childcare instead of another; why they prefer this institution; what their priorities are for their child; and what their concerns are.

As parents are strongly influenced by their support systems on their ideas on childrearing and education, it is useful to ask about this. Is the parents' decision a continuation of a tradition or are they are breaking with tradition? If other family members are worried about this decision, it could be useful to suggest to the parents that these family members be included in discussions. In practice, it often appears that, for example, grandmothers' worries have indirect repercussions on the mothers' attitudes in the institution – for example, she may become very demanding. By gaining the trust of the grandmother, this situation can be defused.

While the initial meeting is probably a task that primarily belongs to the director of the institution, it is a good idea to include staff members in subsequent meetings as soon as the decision has been made to register the child at the centre. In the case of family daycare providers, they should be intensively counselled during the first meetings by the responsible agency. The exploration of the third subsystem (the communal environment) can, to a certain degree, also be a discussion point during these talks.

Exploring the educational practices (second subsystem) is perhaps a more difficult task. In order to realise the goal 'one plus one is three', the institution should have a thorough picture of the important individual childrearing habits with respect to, for example, feeding, sleeping and comforting. In practice, at VBJK we have learned that asking about these things does not give a real picture. Often, parents cannot tell exactly how they put their children to sleep. These are practices that have to be shown rather than told.

We have also seen that when parents are asked to come to the childcare centre or family daycare provider for an adjustment session, the educators are not always able to see the parents' actual childrearing practices. The parents often treat their children at the institution the way they think the educator would do it and not the way they normally do. Inadvertently, the educator is on the home front where there is an unequal power balance weighted against the new and somewhat uncomfortable parents, who may feel that they are being 'judged'. It is not easy for the educators to make it clear that they are not checking to see if the parents are 'doing a good job', but that they simply need to learn how best to care for the parents' children.

In line with this, the educator does not have all the professional answers, but is rather someone who coaxes the mother into talking about her child. The paradox here is that the further the culture or subculture of the educator is from the parent, the greater the chance that there will be significant differences between the institution's approach and that of the home; and therefore, the greater the chance that parents will feel judged and less inclined to demonstrate their practices. Equally, not everyone has the same opportunities, the self-assurance and the assertiveness to express their own wishes. Some families will be more inclined to 'leave it to the experts'. The educator's task is

to pass the power into the hands of these parents, so that they themselves are able to act with greater responsibility (Raes, 1997). This is called *empowerment.*

Here are a few real life examples. A mother comes for an adjustment session and, when her baby gets tired, the educator suggests that it would be no problem to put him down to sleep. She shows the mother the nursery where a crib is kept for the new child. The mother puts the child to bed in the crib. Afterwards, it turns out that the child is never put to sleep in a crib, but that the mother still lets the child sleep in a baby carrier. The second example is of a mother who is visiting the childcare centre when the children are given mashed fruit. The educator gives the mother a bowl and a spoon and watches how she feeds her child. The scene is a bit awkward. Afterwards, it turns out that this was the first time that the child had eaten mashed fruit, because at home the first solid food consists of soup with bread.

Both examples come from a study group of educators who conducted a year long experiment with the adjustment policy.[113] In both examples, the educators were convinced that it was necessary to have a clear picture of the differences in childrearing practices. They were genuinely open to other customs and habits and were prepared to adjust their views on feeding schedules, sleeping rituals, and so on. Nonetheless, it proved extremely difficult to gain enough information about childrearing practices, especially from mothers from cultures and subcultures that differed greatly from theirs. After the experimental year, the study group came up with the following suggestions:

> ***That the institution should have a policy that clearly states – before each new child is admitted – that the presence of the parents is essential for the realisation of successful care. When this is only 'offered' to those interested, only the most assertive parents react. In order to achieve this, the institution should find out who the significant people are for the children and how they can become involved. Neither the length of the visits by the parents and children nor their frequency need to be predetermined. There is no point in having the parents come to the institution more often than they want to or not allowing them to come 'because their time is up', when the parents need more time to prepare for the separation. However, the***

> ***institution should make it clear what it, at the very least, wants to learn from the parents: their practices with respect to feeding, sleeping and comforting. This means that, ideally, these situations must occur during the adjustment visits. How often and for how long parents come should be individually decided in consultation with the parents. The study group found that good results are achieved when parents of children at a centre are involved in registering new parents. In the French crèche parentales, this is common practice which validates the experienced parents and is extremely welcoming to new ones.***[114]

The study group also highlighted other considerations.

> ***It is a good idea to ask the parents to bring the materials that their child is used to when feeding and sleeping. Thus, the differences between home and centre are reduced, and parents do not have to use 'strange' materials at the institution.***

When dealing with agencies for family daycare providers, the adjustment policy requires intensive cooperation between the agencies and the family daycare providers. The first contacts between parents and daycare providers are made, after all, through the agency. The agency will have to clarify the daycare providers' adjustment policy and record parents' expectations. They will then have to support and counsel the family daycare provider who then puts this adjustment policy into practice.

In this first phase, it is imperative that the educator makes it clear, both verbally and non-verbally, that he or she is open to differences in practice. Discussions on how parents' childrearing practices can best be put into practice at the institution belongs in the second phase.

The second phase – determining differences

The second phase deals with determining the differences with respect to childrearing customs and expectations. Here is an example from the study group (Vandenbroeck, 1999). Jeffrey came to the daycare centre as a small baby. His African mother carried him bundled on her back. With unerring sensitivity, she knew when the baby was tired or had a dirty diaper. From the conversations

during the adjustment period, it appeared that this was the way that Jeffrey fell asleep. The educator asked the mother to teach her to tie the baby onto her back with the African waistcloth, but this turned out to be too difficult for the educator.[115]

At this stage, the educator was able to carry out the delicate task of talking about those differences that she felt to be difficult. It is not, after all, the intention of the institution to adopt *all* the parents' childrearing practices. This is often impossible, for practical reasons, such as with the African waistcloth, or because of principles; a childcare centre, for example, does not have to hit a child just because the parents do. Parents do not often expect this, either. Sometimes parents even ask explicitly not to do as they do, like the mother who, somewhat embarrassed, said that her son would only eat yoghurt and cheese at home but she hoped that the educator would be able to get him to eat bread.

In this phase, it is essential that the educator avoids 'competing'. The discussion is not, after all, about 'what is best', but about 'what is different'. And the differences will be greater as more parents from different backgrounds come to the childcare centre or family daycare provider. The chance is therefore also greater that the educators, sooner or later, will be confronted with childrearing practices that reach the limit of their tolerance, such as the case of the mother who added large amounts of sugar to the bottle for feeding.

The third phase – negotiating

This brings us to the third phase: the actual negotiations between parents and caregivers on educational and childrearing practices. As discussed in the previous chapter, it is best to keep the negotiations at the level of practice (the second subsystem) and to avoid the level of fundamental discussion. Successful negotiations can make all the difference to children and families. The result can be that the institution adjusts its practices to the customs at home. This was, for example, the case with the child whose first solid meals were soup with bread and not strained fruit. In the case of Jeffrey, the educator first tried to use a waistcloth and later tried a hammock. This worked beautifully and the baby slept wonderfully in it. The result can also be that the institution and the parents agree that they are different and that these differences are acceptable. This was the case for a family who ate with their hands at home but wanted the family daycare provider to teach the child to eat with a fork and spoon in preparation

for kindergarten. It was also the case for the child who never had any chores at home but was expected to clear the table at school. It is important that both parties are aware of each other's practices and that they respect the differences, even though they do not have to agree with them.

At times there is no discrepancy between practice at the institution and at home. At other times, there is such a wide gulf that children cannot cope with it. In this case, the parent and the educator must together develop new practices. This was the case of the child whose mother put sugar in his milk and who refused to drink milk that was not sweetened. In response, the childcare centre and the parent together set up a schedule whereby the amount of sugar was gradually reduced. This meant however, that the daycare centre also added sugar during the first phase even though it was against their ideas of a healthy diet. There was also a situation in which the mother and the educator decided together how they would limit the child's use of a pacifier. The result of the negotiations can be a practice that satisfies both the family and the institution and in which the child's interests prevail. This is even more so when one works with parents who are at or below the poverty line, or with parents who face educational and childrearing problems.

Sometimes educators are forced to contravene the childrearing practices of the parents in the interests of the child. This does not mean, however, that they do not respect the parents. Such a situation demands excellent inter-personal skills on the part of the professionals in which the ability to maintain dialogue and to 'step outside oneself' is essential. In other words, to follow the view of the Yeti. If the educator is unable to do this, there is a risk that the child will be placed in a conflict situation. A situation like this is untenable for children and can manifest itself in resistance by the children towards the parents or educators, or quiet and withdrawn behaviour (Olivier, 1998). Ultimately, the development of the children in the broadest sense will be affected by this and their identity development will suffer the most. Furthermore, when a child is placed in a position of conflict, the institution automatically loses its function as a transitional space for the child's socialisation.

The whole process of initiating and carrying out the negotiations requires tact on the part of the educators. During the intake and introductory talks, they want to learn about the parents' private lives. This may make some parents feel

like they are being interrogated. Parents who have had many discussions with social workers can be extremely sensitive to this. A well-meaning interview could be interpreted as an interrogation to see if 'they are taking good enough care of their children.' Brown (1998) argues that, with refugees in particular, extreme care should be taken during the interviews, as they have often had very negative experiences with information gathering in the past.

Additional difficulties arise with families who do not speak the dominant language. While it can be in the institution's interest – as a representative of the public domain – to introduce itself as monolingual, it seems impossible to fulfil the institution's primary task of providing quality care without good communication with parents. This means that the institution has no other choice than to call upon interpreters. These can be professional interpreters but often can be other parents or family members. Involving parents from ethnic minorities who also speak the dominant language has the added advantage that they not only interpret the language, but also provide other insights to the families.

There is no doubt that the transition from home for parents and children to the institution demands proper guidance from the institution. This is no easy task. It cannot be emphasised strongly enough that neither the management nor the educators can do it alone, without support, counselling and team consultation. A good adjustment policy that is based on negotiation is a team effort. It is only through regular consultation about each newcomer that the policy can be continually evaluated and adjusted until the practice is in agreement with the social and educational mission. This means that family daycare providers who are connected to a project will also have to meet together.

A good adjustment policy and careful negotiations are, of course, no guarantee that there will be no friction, misunderstandings or conflicts in the further relationship between the institution and the family. However important the beginning of the relationship is, the parents' involvement can only grow via further contact.

The parent policy – involvement

The French *crèche parentales* which have a great deal of experience in stimulating parental involvement in extremely diverse settings[116], differentiate between three

levels of involvement which they see as chronological. Each level can only be successful when the basis for the previous level has been laid.

Negotiation is the first level. Parents often initially have the attitude of a client, a consumer expecting a service. Careful negotiations with the parents are required to get them to take a more active role in the centre's daily functioning.

Participation is the second level. Encouraged by the example of other parents and educators, new parents will gradually take on a specific activity: doing puzzles with the children, reading to them, taking care of lunch, and so on. They become more active and begin to talk about what they have to offer the group. This is not about the parent helping the institution by baking cakes for a party. It is about the participation of each individual parent in the institution's daily life. Research conducted by Teresa Smith in Great Britain has shown that most parents (two-thirds) would like to be more involved but feel that they should be invited by the institution. Smith (1980) talks about poor matching between the expectations of parents and the questions that the educators have. She argues that educators must learn to recognise individual parental interest and take advantage of it, and that as parents' participation does not necessarily lead to better mutual understanding – sometimes leading to friction, conflicts and demands – it therefore requires a great deal of explanation, discussion and dialogue initiated by the educator.

Participation must ultimately lead to the third level of involvement, ***cooperation***. After a period of participation that has been stimulated by the educator or by other parents, new parents will start to present their own ideas, changes and questions; to question the institution's functioning; or propose improvements. This begins the process of cooperation, and the parents – who are now conscious of their competence – will actively influence the functioning of the group or institution.

This three level evolution is based on the skill of the professional educators in supporting parental involvement. It goes without saying that they can be applied to any number of practical situations. When applied to meals, for example, the first level – negotiation – means that the habits at home and the institution are carefully explored with the parent in order to come to an agreement about

feeding. The second level – participation – means that the parent helps in providing the meals. At the third level, cooperation, the parents will organise the menu with the professional educator's help.

Studies have shown that such extensive involvement supports the parents in fulfilling their parental roles and positively influences interactions with their children, in particular those in difficult circumstances (Tijus *et al*, 1994). It not only improves relationships between parents and professional educators, but especially the relationship *among* parents, so that a form of networking is established. Moreover, in situations where parents are having difficulties with childrearing, this networking is on the most important preventive factors because it provides strong social support to parents (Hermanns, 1992).

At the VBJK, we observed a good example of this in a Ghent daycare centre. Every week at a particular time, the toddlers take part in musical activities. Each time, the parents are asked if they want to take part in these activities, and five of the mothers do so regularly. These mothers have got to know the children and each other quite well. When one of the mothers became involved in divorce proceedings, she was ostracised by her immediate neighbourhood, her social network. Fortunately through the music activities at the centre, she was able to keep in touch with a few significant women from the neighbourhood. Participation by children's families is not so easy when it comes to family daycare providers. Initially, the parents negotiate mostly with the organising agencies, while the actual care is usually provided in the home of the daycare provider. Once care has been organised, the agency ceases to be involved unless there is a conflict situation. From then on the agency's role is supporting the daycare provider to maximise parental involvement. But as family daycare providers do their work in their homes, their work and private lives are closely interwoven. This is why they are less often inclined to involve the parents in the day-to-day activities.

The road to parental involvement runs via many small daily events such as the contacts made through dropping off and picking up the children. In order to maximise this interaction, some daycare centres or kindergartens have established a morning or evening 'circuit' – the space is arranged in such a way that those who bring or pick up a child are required to walk through the group.

They have done this by moving the coat rack from the hall to the back of the room, or by moving the cabinets with personal effects into the group. A friendly space can be created, where there is coffee and tea for those who have a bit more time. It is the educator's task to fill this time actively: introduce parents to each other, start conversations about the children, exchange bits of news, and so on. It is the educator who takes the initiative here, continually explaining everything about the functioning of the centre, without expecting that the parents will know about the various practices.

In one Brussels childcare centre the educators complained that the parents – especially the immigrant parents – had 'little interest in what was happening with their children'.[117] Upon further questioning, it appeared that this impression was based on the fact that these parents hardly ever came into the group and never asked the staff questions. During team discussions, the 'evening pick up circuit' was checked. It then became clear that the parents had no reason to move beyond the entrance hall. Everything they needed, shoes, jackets and so on, was in the hall. Even important messages to the parents were in the hall. When parents came to pick up their toddlers, they didn't have to set foot into the group. Perhaps many of them thought that this was what they were supposed to do.

An experiment was set up for a month: a different circuit was arranged and the staff were told that they were to approach a few of the parents, preferably those who were conspicuously 'less involved'. Every time these parents came to get their children, the staff would tell them something about the day and ask a few questions. One of the educators, who spoke Arabic and Berber as well as Dutch, used her languages whenever appropriate, and also interpreted for her Dutch speaking colleagues. After one month, the view that the educators had about 'disinterested' parents had completely changed.

Studies in the Netherlands have shown that 20 percent of 80 daycare centres questioned reported that they had less 'bring and pick up' contact with parents from ethnic minorities than with Dutch parents; and half the centres reported that immigrant parents took part less often in the formal gatherings (Vedder *et al*, 1996). The same trend was seen in a British study (Smith, 1980). This means that there is still a good deal of work ahead to eradicate barriers to daily contact.

As well as the contact made through bringing and picking up children, there are other opportunities such as meetings with parents about a particular theme; coffee mornings in which parents and educators can chat together informally; and parties. In every handbook on childcare, one can find a whole list of possible initiatives to promote relationships with parents. At the VBJK, experience has taught us, however, that formal parent gatherings can never compensate for inadequate informal contact. Formal meetings are only useful when they grow out of and are the result of good informal contact. If not, they could all too easily lead to mutual frustration: educators' frustrations concerning low attendance; and parents' frustration at not feeling involved and, if they come, do so out of a sense of duty and then say what they think the educator wants to hear (Flising, 1992).

Fathers

Many educators report that they have trouble getting fathers involved. This applies to most fathers in general and often to Muslim fathers, in particular. Italian psychologist Carmine Ventimiglia (1994), having researched this phenomena and interviewed educators and fathers, argues that childcare takes place in a predominantly female environment – nearly all the educators are women, and are often mothers. When educators talk to the mothers who bring and pick up their children, they often talk to them as women and as mothers, rather than as professional educators. They talk about the child at the daycare centre as well as at home. If the educator has children of her own, she often talks about them. When communication between the mother and the educator is good, they also talk about all kinds of other, personal matters and there is no clear boundary between the personal and professional.

In contrast, the talks with fathers appear to be much more centred on the child's behaviour in the daycare centre, without the personal matters being discussed. This, plus the fact that many fathers do not feel at home in the predominantly female culture of the childcare centre, gives the educator the impression that they are less interested. In turn, this results in them being spoken to less, so that a vicious circle, a *self-fulfilling prophecy*, is created. Ventimiglia cites another example that perpetuates the vicious circle: the educator's attitudes. Quite often, when educators have to ask the parent to bring something from home, they will generally ask the mother. If the father comes to get the children, they will ask

him, but add that they also put a note in the child's bag for the mother. We can assume that this also happens with family daycare providers.

It makes one wonder, in two-parent families, if it is even necessary to involve fathers in daycare or kindergarten. Is the ideal of paternal involvement not a typical example of eurocentric thinking: a western middle-class value that is assumed to be universal? In various subgroups there are, after all, different norms on how parental – and within that, paternal – involvement should be displayed. American researcher Michael E. Lamb, who has spent years researching the effects of paternal involvement on child development, concludes that it is not a bad idea for the father to, indeed, conform to his subgroup's prevailing views on fatherhood. In his 1997 survey, he concluded that there is no predetermined father role that every father must aspire to. A successful father – defined in terms of the child's development – is one whose role agrees with the regulations of his socio-cultural and familial context. This means that a high degree of paternal involvement can have a positive effect in some situations, and a negative effect in others. The same holds true for a low degree of paternal involvement.

Moreover, there is hardly any solid evidence to prove that fathers have a separate – *different* – role in the development of young children from mothers (Lewis, 1997). However, there is sufficient reason to believe that paternal involvement has a positive effect on the self-confidence and social contact of kindergarten children (Biller & Kimpton, 1997).

The discussion on whether or not one should make an extra effort to involve fathers at childcare centres and kindergartens, in particular, rages in institutions in Europe with a large Muslim enrolment. Many of these institutions report, for example, that fathers rarely attend the parent meetings. They see that as the fathers withdraw from the parental role the mother-child attachment is strengthened. Abdellatif Chaouite (1996) identifies several factors to explain this, based on studies in Northern France:[118]

Socio-economic factors for example, unemployment, destabilise the social role of the father and affect his self-image. Because of his unstable social position, the father loses his credibility and cannot or will not take on the role of male head of the family.

Different experiences of migration between men (wage earners) and women (homemakers) which have different effects on their ideas and strategies of integration.

There are also factors linked to a ***generation conflict*** that is intensified by identity conflicts between the immigrant father and his children and/or partner who have been socialised in the resident country. There are factors inherent in ***social services***, the childcare institutions which, unconsciously and inadvertently, increase this imbalance. These were some of the factors which were also discussed in the Ventimiglia study (1994).

These various factors affect each other and often result in fathers no longer seeing themselves as the person to pass the history on to their children. Fathers can no longer rely on the paternal image that they received from their fathers; they must search for other symbols and other interpretations of their paternal role.

If this is the case, Chaouite (1996) does not see them as fathers withdrawing from their parental roles, but as fathers who are feeling pushed aside. Nahima Lanjri, a Belgian-Moroccan and a resident of Antwerp, describes the experience of many immigrant fathers as follows:

> ***The image of the strict, authoritarian Moroccan or Turkish* 'pater familias' *(male head of household) is a myth. In reality, the father has been put out of action. He is a nonentity who watches from the sidelines to see what goes on at home. Why is that? It is because he has no instruction booklet on how he can reconcile his ideas on childrearing with the reality in a foreign country. His norms and values mean nothing here. He – literally – does not understand his children … If, to the best of his ability, he intervenes, he is censured by a whole army of social workers … 'If I can't raise my children the way I want to, then the State has to do it.' His expectations with respect to the State are extremely high. (Lanjri, 1998)***

This analysis does not, perhaps, only apply to immigrant fathers, but rather to all parents with a damaged self-image. This is why the *crèche parentales* continue to focus attention on this group. Their approach, described in earlier chapters,

creates opportunities because each parent, regardless of gender or personal history, is called upon to use a specific skill to accomplish a certain task (without predetermining how the involvement is to be expressed). This is greatly appreciated by many parents who feel 'shelved'. Chaouite (1996) describes a successful experiment with a group of men in a village in France, in which neighbourhood leaders were closely involved on an ad hoc basis, and in which the men discussed their concerns about childrearing with each other. Lanjri refers to the success of men's groups in the town of Borgerhout, Belgium, where immigrant fathers gather to search collectively for solutions to their childrearing problems.

193

Notes

109. The term 'parent' refers explicitly to the mother as well as the father (or, for example, the mother and the co-mother in the case of lesbian parents).

110. Whereas it used to be the case that continuity was defined as the relationship between the child and the educator, during the last few years, several authors have advocated continuity or stability within a group of children (for example, Singer, 1996). This concern has also influenced educational guidelines concerning the minimal presence of the children in the group.

111. Taken from an interview for the video 'Respekt voor diversiteit in de kinderopvang' (Peeters 1998) that reports the experiences of the MEQ project conducted by the VBJK, University of Ghent (1996-98).

112. In reality, this is not the first separation. For many authors, there are two earlier and very significant ones. The first is the birth, which is the parting from the imaginary child. The next one is the separation from the breast when the child is weaned (Dolto, 1984; Biarnès, 1999). Going to a care insitution is, however, an essential separation because it signifies the entrance into society.

113. This was a group of childcare workers who were caring for babies in several Flemish daycare centres. The group held monthly meetings over a period of two years under the supervision of the VBJK and the Pedagogical Guidance Service of the City of Ghent. This activity was carried out within the framework of the DECET network and was partly financed by the Bernard van Leer Foundation.

114. Statements about this can be found (both from the viewpoints of the parent and educator) on the CD-ROM 'Respect for diversity in early childhood care and education' (Vandenbroeck, 1998a). In this vein, an Algerian-French mother stated, 'I spent some time in a childcare centre and met another Algerian mother there. We talked together and she explained to me that the educators were very open to our way of childrearing.'

196

115. It is, of course, not the case that every African mother lets her child sleep on her back, just as not all Asian parents have their children sleep with them, or not all Flemish middle-class parents put their children to bed in a slightly darkened room with a pacifier and a lullaby.

116. The Childcare Network of the European Commission also recommends the crèches parentale's practice for other childcare centres. In the CD-ROM 'Respect for diversity in early childhood care and education', a clear overview of *crèche parentales* practices is given (Vandenbroeck, 1998a). Pot (1994) can also be consulted for a concrete description of a crèche parentale.

117. This was a traditional daycare centre that, because of the neighbourhood it was in, had an extremely varied enrolment with respect to both socio-economic levels and cultural backgrounds. The daycare centre was supported by the VBJK within the framework of the MEQ project.

118. Chaouite is an intercultural psychologist in Grenoble, France.

198

Chapter eight

The Tower of Babel

These days, there is hardly any country in the world where only one language is spoken. Certainly in Western Europe, every country has become, in practice, a small Tower of Babel[119] in which, alongside the official language(s), at least three other languages are currently spoken. In this context, Belgium has a very special place. Historically, the country has been continually dominated by cultures with other languages: the Romans, the Spaniards, the Austrians, the French, the Dutch and, most recently, the Germans. Each group has left its linguistic traces behind, as well as its sensitivities and controversies. Is the Dutch of the Netherlands the same language as the Dutch of Belgium? Officially and according to the law it is, but many Belgians will answer this question with: 'I certainly hope not'. Partly as a result of this history, Belgians live in a country that has three official languages: Dutch, French and German. Nonetheless, there are more families who speak English (as a result of Brussels being the seat of the European Community and NATO) in Belgium than German. Brussels has, among others, Dutch, French, German, English, and Japanese schools; and in a health centre in central Antwerp, Polish, Serbo-Croat, Berber, Turkish and a dozen African languages are regularly spoken by the clientele.

I grew up in a suburb of Brussels. The street, the vacant lots and building sites were our kingdom. My playmates primarily spoke French; but many of them were English speaking (one friend was Scottish and it took me a long time to discover that what he was speaking was also English); two friends spoke Danish and Swedish (it took a while before I realised that they were two separate languages); and the little girl across the street spoke German. Nonetheless, we understood each other when it came down to deciding who could play the hero.

193

For years, the Flemish have been battling to gain respect for their language. During World War I, thousands of Flemish soldiers were sent to their deaths 'in Flanders' fields because their commanders were French speaking. The University of Ghent, where I work, is the first university in Belgium to have Dutch as the language of instruction – and this did not occur until 1930. When my father, a plumber, wanted to learn his trade, the only language he could study this in Brussels was French. The expression '*Et pour les flamands la même chose*' ('and for the Flemish the same') is still fresh in the country's collective memory. The phrase recalls the previous unwillingness of the French-dominated government to use the Flemish language.

These kinds of statements can certainly sting when your mother tongue is a minority language. But 'minority' does not only have to do with numbers. In Brussels, for example, it is generally accepted that young children are raised to be bilingual in school, and the assumption is that this means two of the four major European languages in Belgium: Dutch, French, German or English. Those wishing to establish other language schools, Swahili or Fula for example, could count on a good deal of opposition. In Catalonia, the government supports young children learning Catalan, and in France there is now a very popular Franco-German initiative to establish bilingual daycare centres and kindergartens. A French-Arabic initiative would clearly receive much less support. The well-known adage 'language is the dialect of a people with an army' has lost none of its veracity.

This is the social context within which the institutions operate: it is multilingual, with an ever increasing chance that at least a few children will have a mother tongue that is different from the dominant language. In addition, there is also a social context in which languages are ranked according to a hierarchy of importance, depending on the socio-economic power of the group that speaks that language. Any book dealing with the development of identity, and with childrearing and education in diversity cannot ignore this. For this reason, this book will look at the connection between mother tongue and identity, and the concern that many educators have about the 'poor language development' of non-native speakers. This will be done by looking at practice, where there are excellent examples of multilingual care for young children.

The mother-tongue feeling

French psychologist Abdellatif Chaouite (1997) argues against talking about the mother tongue versus the foreign language, and in favour of the 'mother tongue feeling' versus the 'foreign language feeling'. The word 'feeling' implies 'living in a language', feeling at home in it, having the feeling that the sound and the meaning of the language are one; that the mother tongue is so connected to one's own sense of being that there is no sense of the arbitrary character of the language; that the language and reality are one. Bilingualism is more than the skill of speaking, reading and writing two languages; it is the skill of being able to live in two languages and, therefore, in two worlds. Nearly all authors have pointed out how closely connected language and identity are. The mother tongue is the first melody, the sound and the colour of the voice that cares, the language of the breast that feeds, the language of security, the connection to life itself.[120]

My mother tongue is Dutch. This was not the mother tongue of my mother; hers was the Londerzeel dialect. She never spoke this with me; I spoke what was then called Standard Educated Dutch. I can hardly even imitate either Londerzeel or Brussels (my father's mother tongue). When I was growing up, my parents' dialects did not have the nostalgic value that they sometimes have today. They were considered an obstacle for social progress. Those who dreamed of a good future for their child, dreamed in Standard Educated Dutch. It is one example of how language and future plans are connected. (See Chapter Two and Verbunt 1998)

Our names are also significant in the language issue. We are given a name in a certain language. Our name is chosen by our parents, it is what they call us, and it is how we differentiate ourselves from other people. It is no coincidence that my first name is Michel, my older brother's is Marc and my younger brother's is Philippe. These names work well in both French and Dutch; and they are names with a philosophy. Our family name gives us a place in history; our first names give us meaning and express the desires of our parents. People only exist when they have a name, and if they exist, they have a language. Language aids and steers thinking. When a child learns to talk, there is much more significance than simply learning a few words. The child learns that a

sound, for example 'ball', indicates a real object; that saying that sound indicates reality. That the sound 'ball' becomes all balls. Language is, therefore, a symbol of reality and not the reality itself. By realising this, the child then knows that a ball is not a block and that 'ball' is a different category from, for example, 'toys'. However, the sound 'mama' means one person and nobody else. When other children use the same sound, they mean other people entirely. In other words, language is not only the result of intellectual development, it gives form to reality and also steers thinking.

As language symbolises reality, it helps us to step back from reality. In this way, language helps us to observe that reality, to be able to think about it. We think in a language, and cannot think without language. This is perhaps what a refugee in the Netherlands meant when he said that at first, as a refugee, you feel very uncertain about yourself. He explained that two times two is four in his country too, but during that first period he even doubted that. As he learned more Dutch, this feeling gradually disappeared. He then found that he was simply translating his old knowledge into the new language (Hollands, 1998).
This is corroborated by Faruk Hodzic, accordionist with the flamenco pop group 'Les Charmeurs' and a Bosnian refugee in the Netherlands since 1991, who says:

> ***As a foreigner, you go through three phases. First, you don't know the language and you don't understand anyone. Then you learn the language and think that you understand everything. Finally, your language gets even better and you really understand everything. At that point, you don't understand the Dutch anymore (Avenue, 1995).***

When we can't understand something, we often say: 'there are no words for this'. It is Whorf's well-known paradigm (quoted in Ackaert and Deschouwer, 1999): the organisation of the world works according to the structure of the language. Language is the guide for social reality. The way we see, hear or experience something is determined by the language customs of the community. What we think is determined by language, and different languages result in different visions of the world. Language, therefore, does not only allow us to think, it also structures and limits that thinking. That which we cannot put into words, we cannot communicate, and thus also cannot grasp. At the same time, how we

verbalise things is determined by the language that we have learned. This means that the way we perceive and talk about reality is determined (and, therefore, limited) by that language.[121] One has to be an artist, a creator, to fool the discipline of a language. By throwing words off balance, writers create new meanings. This is the dilemma of liberating and limiting language.

Apart from our image of the world, our self-image is also a consequence of language. Just as we cannot think about reality without language, neither can we think about ourselves without it – it begins with the name we are given. We get it from others, but we keep it for our entire life, until we have become one with it. It is through and with language that children differentiate themselves from their mother and develop a relationship with her. In the words of Françoise Dolto (see Liaudet, 1998): 'language allows the trial of separation to end well'. The extent to which language and identity are related is especially clear in minority language situations. Ackaert and Deschouwer (1999) carried out an interesting study on this subject among immigrants in Brussels, in which an inventory was taken on what languages the Turkish and Moroccan residents of Brussels spoke, and on the groups of reference they placed themselves in. The results of their study confirmed, without a doubt, the connection between language and identity. Bilingual immigrants systematically identified themselves more with Belgians than with monolingual immigrants. The better they spoke French or Dutch, the less important their ethnic group was, and the more significant other groups (for example, co-workers) became. Naturally, their ethnic group was not excluded and most respondents reported that they identified with their ethnic group as well as other groups. However, even when these nuances are taken into account and other variables are excluded, the connection between language and identification remains a factor (Ackaert & Deschouwer, 1999).

Caleb was 10 months old when he first went to a daycare centre at the University of Ghent. His parents came from Kenya to Belgium on research fellowships at the University. Caleb was suffering from shock. Everything was new to him: different people, different language, different customs, and a different environment. Caleb was miserable and cried continually at the centre. In consultation with the daycare centre, his parents tried to stay with him as much as possible: in the morning, his mother stayed for an hour; in the evening, his

father took over. After about three weeks, Caleb's misery was gradually replaced by anger. He was angry at everyone: educators and other children. He slept a great deal: his way of fleeing the situation. The caregivers were at their wits' end. All the extra attention they gave him, all the patience and the talks with the parents appeared to have little effect. One day, a caregiver put on a CD of Kenyan music. Caleb immediately stopped crying and went to sit, spellbound, in front of the CD player. He smiled for the first time. It was immediately clear to everyone that Caleb was reacting to the language as well as to the music.

As adults, we cannot imagine how it feels for children to be in a class or a play group where they do not understand the language or know the codes. Observations in daycare centres and kindergartens show us how confused these children are. This confusion can be expressed in aggression, resistance, crying, feeding problems, vomiting, insomnia or sleeping too much. Which implicit messages do children pick up about their mother tongue – and therefore, about their mother and, by extension, about themselves – when it is nowhere to be found in their group? What messages will they pick up on how society deals with multilingualism? What will they learn about the place of their mother tongue in the social hierarchy? What does this teach them about how to deal with the two, or more, worlds they live in?

In the chapters 'I am me' and 'Writing one's own story', the importance was highlighted of supporting young children in creating a multiple identity, in realising that it isn't necessary to make a choice between this world or that one. In caring for the development of minority-language children, one must search for ways in which the home language of the child is respected. Schools must respect the children's mother tongues as is explicitly stated in the Convention for the Rights of the Child (Articles 29 and 30, see Appendix); and daycare centres must be the bridge and not the rift between the home and society.

Integration or assimilation?

A question often asked is whether or not immigrants must learn the dominant language. Of course they must, and studies have also shown that they want to. But it is a misconception to think that it is sufficient simply to place immigrant children in a setting where the dominant language is spoken and assume that they will then learn it. In reality, acquisition of a second language is a complex business, and is linked to questions of attitude: the attitude towards integration

and assimilation; self-image; and the position in the social hierarchy of the mother tongue and the second language. The educators' point of departure remains, however, language acquisition among non-native speakers. An insufficient knowledge of the dominant language means that the children will not be able to keep up in school and that this limits their chances of secondary education. They are in danger of social exclusion and have a greater chance of becoming unemployed. Lanjri (1998), referring to a Flemish context, gives a perfect description of this system:

> ***Sometimes it even starts to go wrong in kindergarten. These are not simply play groups where the children spend their time playing nicely together until Mama or Papa comes to get them. The standards are high. Three year old kids have to learn Flemish songs, be verbally expressive and learn to listen attentively. For some children from ethnic minorities, this is not self-evident. At home, they do not learn the same language skills as their Flemish school friends. Because of this, they sometimes need a bit more time and attention. However, those who don't achieve the pre-determined list of objectives by the time they are three or four years old – and if the parents don't prod the educators to put in more effort with those falling behind – they can forget it in our educational system. Such 'cases' are silently removed from the achievement oriented educational machine and shuffled into specially adapted institutions which are less challenging. This does not only apply to immigrants, but to all underprivileged children who need extra attention. I know an underprivileged Belgian girl who had to repeat the second year of kindergarten, officially because she couldn't cut along a straight line. In reality, she didn't understand her classmates well enough. When she finally got to the first grade – and that was not until she was eight – she was branded for the rest of her school career … Without exaggeration, you could say that, once immigrant children have started to slip through the holes in the educational net, they keep gaining speed. From kindergarten they are sent to remedial education and, from there, it is a short hop to trade school. Twenty-six percent of them land in a lower technical trade school and 56 percent are off to vocational training (Lanjri, 1998).***

It is, therefore, a valid concern of educators that they make sure – in the limited time that they have – that the children get into and remain in the educational system. It is, therefore, essential that they do everything they can to bring the

children's knowledge of the dominant language up to the highest possible level. Language is, after all one of the keys to social integration.[122] There are two ways that language and social integration are connected. First, language is a means to integration, and second, language is often seen as one part of the integration; or as a symbol of it. In this case, a limited knowledge of the dominant language is often seen as a sign that the person does not want to integrate. In reality, language is both the means to and the result of social integration. However, social integration cannot be restricted to the language aspect of the cultural difference as this would give a limited picture of reality.

Language cannot be separated from other elements such as social status, as been seen in the previous discussion on integration. While learning the Dutch language is, for example, an important pre-condition for the social integration of a Moroccan family living in Flanders and the Netherlands, the English speaking population in Brussels is much less in need of learning the official languages for its social success. In this discussion, it is also clear that the educator's position plays a role in the view that is taken.

More than half of the Moroccan respondents in the Brussels' study admitted to being illiterate. Among the Turkish respondents, this was about 16 to 18 percent, although less than half of them have a reasonable to good knowledge of French. It also appeared that there was some language loss among the immigrant population (van de Craen, 1999). Even if the situation is not as drastic in other cities with less complex language environments, these figures are still of concern, and they clearly demonstrate that learning Dutch as a second language should be an important focus of attention. It is a concern that educators share with non-Dutch speaking parents, who generally have extremely high educational expectations for their children and feel that it is exceedingly important for their children to learn the dominant language (see, for example, Pels, 1998; Nijsten, 1998).

While parents feel this way, they often still fear that learning the dominant language could mean that their children lose their own culture, or at least those elements that they consider important. Language then becomes not only a means of social integration but of assimilation, which is entirely different. The idea that a better knowledge of a language will increase the level of assimilation is also held by educators, and for some, is the argument they use to promote

learning the dominant language. Language is also a means of acculturation, of adopting the norms of the dominant group.

In practice, the way in which institutions deal with multilingualism says a great deal about their views of society and cultural identity. Thus, the discussion about non-native speaking children is very different and more intense among educators in Brussels than in other parts of Flanders. Educators in Brussels resist the use of other languages in daycare centres more than those in other parts of the country. This is because Brussels' Flemish speakers are themselves in a minority position and must wage tiny battles every day to maintain their native language. This partly explains the difficulty in opening up childcare centres to minority languages. The way in which the educators interpret the issue of language in practice is therefore also a question of their own personal histories.

As far as I remember, I learned Dutch by reading the 'Suske and Wiske' comic books by Vandersteen. I started with the large sized words (EEK! WAT!) and then moved on to the conversation balloons. At the same time, I learned French by reading the Tin Tin stories by Hergé (AIE! QUOI!) over and over again. Both learning processes took place at my grandmother's house where there was a treasure chest of comic books. In this way, I became aware that a second language is not a threat to the first one; it is enrichment. This realisation is as deeply anchored in me as the smell of veal cutlets sizzling on my grandmother's stove. The viewpoints and practices concerning language are not only a question of personal history, but also of the history of the country in which one lives. In the Anglo-Saxon world, you will not find a book on 'intercultural work' without a chapter on multilingualism. In the French literature, with its history of the nation-state, this is much less evident.

It is clear that the approach towards non-native speakers can vary greatly, depending upon the degree to which one accepts one of the four models described by Vedder et al (1996) (see Chapter Five). It is also appropriate to distinguish between *additive bilinguals* and *subtractive bilinguals*. The former are those who are skilful in their native language and the local language, developed because of their positive attitudes towards their own group and the dominant group. They want to become integrated without losing their own culture, and they identify with both. Subtractive bilinguals are those whose native language

will eventually be completely replaced by the dominant language. This occurs when immigrants want to completely assimilate and no longer want to identify with their own group (Ackaert & Deschouwer, 1999).[123]

Given the context of this book, its discussions about mother tongue and identity, and its focus on the tasks of the educator, only *additive* bilinguals are discussed. The challenge for educators is how to support non-native speaking children to acquire the local language in such a way that it respects their individuality and shapes multiple identity? When the question is posed this way, it becomes a part of a more general question about the organisation's approach as a transitional area between family and society. This is not only a fundamental question, but a practical and didactic one. How do we best support *secondary bilingualism* – in which a second language is learned after the first language – without damaging objectives with respect to identity? At the same time, the counterpart questions must be asked: what image do we want to give monolingual Dutch children about non-native speakers and multilinguals? What is the image of the 'other' that we want to create during our activities in connection with language?

Secondary bilingualism

From the above, it becomes apparent that language acquisition is complex. In a historical context, research on second language acquisition started gaining momentum in the late 1950s. This research primarily concentrated on the children's personal and individual factors. For example, the research looked at areas such as whether memory and the children's competence in expressing themselves in their first language determines how the second language is acquired. In other words, the causes for success or failure were sought in the children themselves and were measured in terms of cognitive (intellectual) skills. Later, attention turned to children's emotional side: researchers also studied the attitudes towards the group speaking the second language, and the motivation to learn this language. At the same time, there were also questions concerning the influence of bilingualism on both intellectual and personality development (for example, the questions addressed above on additive and subtractive bilingualism and the connection with identity).

These days, more attention is paid to the broader social context within which a second language is learned. In doing this, the relationship between the two

language *groups* – and, therefore, not only the individual – is taken into account. While understanding of second language acquisition is becoming increasingly more complete, it is also becoming increasingly more complex. At the moment, it is assumed that there are no less than 300 factors that play a role in the successful, or unsuccessful, early acquisition of a second language. These have to do with motivation and a positive attitude towards the two languages, and the time that one spends on both of them (Schaerlaekens, 1994).

From the wide range of studies, it appears that the great majority of children are certainly capable of becoming multilingual. However, learning a school language alongside a home language is more than simply becoming bilingual, it is a double task, states Perregaux (1998), a professor of psychology and education in France. He continues by saying that children enter a world where they not only do not know the school language and the dominant one in the environment, but where they must also become flexible in using two languages that allow them to switch from the classroom to the playground, each with its own customs and codes. They can all speak the same language and still not understand each other. Let us now look deeper into the two primary factors that influence language development: attitudes and the time and quality of the language one is exposed to.

Attitudes

As far as attitudes towards two language groups are concerned, they are traditionally divided into four strategies for dealing with multilingualism. The first is the *assimilation strategy*, in which only one language is maintained. The second is the *integration strategy*, in which a new language exists alongside the first language, and individuals attempt to combine the advantages from both backgrounds into their own personal choice. This second strategy comes closest to the concept of multiple identity, and is called *integration* in the division of an additional classification: four types of acculturation. The third is the *separation strategy*, in which the first language is kept intact, but without any contact between the two groups. Finally, there is the *deculturation strategy* – or marginalisation – in which the individuals do not identify with any group whatsoever, and therefore run the risk of becoming marginal and anonymous members of society. People in this group are usually deficient in both languages (Taylor, 1987; Ackaert & Deschouwer, 1999).

Learning a second or third language is very different if you belong to the dominant language group rather than a minority one. As a child, when I learned a mouthful of English this was not at all threatening; it was quite thrilling. It is completely different for a child from an ethnic minority whose parents can feel threatened in their cultural identity. If learning a second language means that their children become estranged from their native language and culture, then it is not surprising that parents feel some resistance. What does it mean to children who call their father 'papa' like other children in their surroundings, but not in the family's first language? And the other way around, what does it mean to a father to be addressed in a language that is not his own?

Studies show that learning the first language – and acknowledging the place that the mother tongue has – supports the learning of a second language (Perregaux, 1998). This has been corroborated by studies of kindergartens in practice (Laevers & van Sanden, 1996). The studies conclude that the motivation of the children must be taken into account. This means that not only must what they hear in their second language be interesting and appropriate, but they must not get the message that learning the second language means rejecting the home culture. In the Dutch context, Laevers and van Sanden conclude that while it sounds paradoxical, the barrier to learning – and wanting to learn – Dutch is lowered when the kindergarten children are also allowed to use their own language.

One highly effective methos is to show interest in the children's native language. Laevers and van Sanden illustrate this with a scene observed in a preschool in which the teacher played a game called 'sound lotto' with four year olds. The teacher lets them hear the sound of people laughing.

Zulfikar:	*'Shaba!'*
Teacher:	*'What was that? What is that sound called in Turkish?' (smiling and bending forward interestedly).*
Zulfikar:	*'Shaba' (grinning).*
Teacher:	*'Oh, in Turkish, it is sha … (uh) … ba. Am I saying it right?'*
Zulfikar:	*'Yes, shaba.'*
Teacher:	*'In Turkish it is shaba and in Dutch it is lachen.' (laughing) – the teacher laughs and the other children laugh with her.*
Zulfikar:	*'Lachen' (everyone laughs).*

If the institution wants non-native speaking children to learn the second language, it will have to be very aware of its position as a transitional space between family and society. If it does not do this, the motivation of the parents and children can quickly turn into fear of the loss of individuality and the institution can forget about its own objectives. In this transitional area, between the private and public domains each institution should investigate how the children's mother tongues are valued – actually or symbolically – at the institution.[124]

The following are some examples of 'bridges' between the home and the institution. In a Brussels daycare centre that receives a good number of non-native speaking children and parents from very different language groups, a large poster is hung at the entrance. On this poster, all the parents have written 'good morning' in their own language. Every time new parents come, they are asked if 'good morning' is already on the poster in their native language; if it isn't, they are asked to add it. The teacher is also taught by the parents how to pronounce the words. Every morning the children can all say 'good morning' in their native languages. The parent then answers '*goede morgen*' in Dutch. It is a symbol of respect for each other's culture and a message to the children and the families that there is no question of making a choice between either Dutch or the native language. For these reasons, and others, experts advise educators to learn certain key words and key phrases in the children's native languages. As a teacher of five year olds says, 'Every so often, I speak a bit of French with Kevin, a Congolese child, if he doesn't understand something. Ever since I started doing that, he seems to be much more receptive to what is happening in the classroom, even to learning Dutch' (Laevers & Van Sanden, 1996).

At the same Brussels daycare centre, every parent is asked to bring a music cassette that is often played at home. (Notice that asking for music that is often played at home is different from asking for 'music from your culture'). If possible, the cassette should also contain vocals. This yields a treasure trove of languages which is given a symbolic place in the classroom. Moreover, regularly hearing music in other languages alongside their own children's songs, sends the Dutch-speaking children a positive message on dealing with diversity. Ultimately, this is a way to integrate diversity so that it does not fall into the tourism trap. (Discussed in Chapter Five)

Many institutions have decided to make the written communication with parents (notes, posted notices, and so on) multilingual, even when non-native speakers would understand the dominant language. Increasingly, multilingual books are finding their way into daycare centres and kindergartens. Thus, nursery school teachers can tell a story in the dominant language and parents can reread the story at home in their own language. Another option is that two teachers, or a teacher and a parent, can tell the story to the group in both languages.[125]

These are different attempts to fulfil the primary conditions for the acquisition of a second language: motivation and attitude. These attempts convey the message of respect which is essential in overcoming the resistance and fear that can be obstacles for multilingualism. These are the bridges that give the child 'permission' to create a multiple identity. Previously, non-native speaking parents were asked to raise their children in Dutch as much as possible. The idea was that a child would learn a second language more easily if there was no competition from the first language. For the same reason, children were sometime required to speak only the dominant language among themselves. There is no scientific evidence that this approach can be justified (De Houwer, 1998). In fact, this approach often causes children not to learn either of the languages well.[126] This period is now, fortunately, almost behind us.

Time and quality

Other important factors appear to be the time and quality that is spent on both languages, and the input of the institution. It is also the 'technical' quality of the language- intervention that determines whether or not children are able to learn a second language. If a child says right before a break: 'Miss, I want to do *that*,' pointing to the painter's easel, and the teacher reacts with 'Is it all right if you do that when we're back from the break?' she exhibits less language-stimulating power than if she were to say, for example, 'You would like to paint, but we don't have time for it right now. First we are going to drink our milk and then you may paint' (Laevers & Van Sanden, 1996).

These aspects of 'time' and 'quality' have received a great deal of attention in the project 'Drie maal woordwaarde' (The value of words) in the Netherlands (Kompier, 1995). In this project, the Turkish preschool teachers speak Turkish to

212

the children of Turkish origin, and the Turkish and Dutch teachers speak Dutch to the Dutch children. This strategy is intended to help the Turkish children learn to differentiate between the two languages as easily as possible, both at the level of word sounds and at the level of sentences. Furthermore, they have a good role model in the bilingual Turkish teacher. In this multilingual environment, one can choose for vocabulary stimulation in Dutch as well as in the native language.

The choice is also determined by the amount of time the children spend at the daycare centre and by the number of educators present. If children attend full-time (five days per week) and there are enough educators (at least two), then vocabulary can be stimulated in both languages. If children come infrequently, or if there is only one educator present in the group, as is the case with family daycare providers, then it is better to choose just one language. In this case, Dutch would, for example, be chosen and then the educators could discuss with the parents the best way to stimulate vocabulary in their own language (Kompier, 1995). If a daycare centre wants to have a successful multilingual policy, then it must offer a sufficient amount of the dominant language as well as a sufficient amount of the children's languages. For children up to the age of 30 months, one monolingual educator with whom the child has a great deal of contact (three to four hours per day) should be sufficient. Preschool children must have the opportunity to speak both languages with several people, in order to make sure that one of the languages does not slowly wither away (Roselaar *et al*, 1993). In projects such as 'The value of words', a great deal of importance is placed on the 'one person one language' strategy. While this means that the various languages should be separated in the child's head in order to avoid confusion, it does not necessarily literally mean that one person may only use one language. There are also other ways to separate the languages, such as coupling a language to a specific activity, area or time.

During the last few years, experiments with multilingual childcare have occurred in various countries. For example, in a childcare centre in the Kreuzberg neighbourhood of Berlin, Germany, which has a large Turkish speaking population, all the children (both German and Turkish) are cared for in both languages by a bilingual team (Özsoy & Hübner, 1999). This is based on the assumption that language is essentially a means of communication, and multilingualism is necessary if one wants to function well in the modern world,

not only for children from ethnic minorities, but for all children. As of yet, there have been no reports on the effects of its approach so that it is not clear what can be expected from it, and in particular, what the effects are for these children once they enter elementary school. Meanwhile in Great Britain, *bilingual support staff* have been employed for a considerable time. These are non-native speaking childcare workers who come into the childcare group or kindergarten at regular intervals to help and support the non-native speaking children. The objectives appear to be more in the area of emotional support than in cognitive support (Wildman, 1998). By capitalising on the children's cultural knowledge and language skills, they build self-confidence in these children. The presence of the support staff helps stimulate the participation of non-native speaking parents (Brown, 1998). In Belgium, the objectives of the elementary school project 'Education in Your Own Language and Culture' (OETC: Onderwijs in de Eigen Taal en Cultuur) include supporting the standard curriculum and learning Dutch, while it also concentrates of the developing identity of children from ethnic minorities (Laevers & Van Sanden, 1996).[127]

Of course, not every institution can offer multilingual childcare. Family daycare providers work, by definition, by themselves and therefore seldom have the opportunity to introduce multilingualism. In some cities, there are dozens of different languages spoken at home, so it becomes impossible to incorporate these languages at the institution. What is certain is that all children should learn the dominant language well enough so that their further school careers are not jeopardised, and they can become socially integrated. This is, indeed, the wish of most parents.

Various authors have emphasised that learning a second language demands of patience from educators; that they should not expect success too quickly (Laevers & Van Sanden, 1996). Brown compares the process with learning to play a musical instrument: it demands time, encouragement and, now and then, success stories. She goes on to say that children can be silent for weeks at the institution, but talk non-stop in their native languages at home; and that silence can also be a form of learning.

We also know that learning a second language is only possible if enough security is offered: emotional security and stability; and the security that the child does

not have to reject family traditions and, therefore, that they are not in a conflict situation with their parents. The children must feel assured that 'growth' in one area does not have to mean loss in another. Therefore, the language-stimulation approach cannot succeed unless there is clear and frequent communication with all the parents with respect to the objectives and practice. A position on language input is, after all, part of the philosophy of the institution and should form a bridge between family and society. Thus, it would be a mistake to regard this as a task for the educators alone, to be fulfilled as efficiently as possible. This bridge can, after all, only be successful if it is based on a partnership with the parents (Smith, 1980). One pre-condition for adopting a language stimulation approach is not only that the language input at the institution is sufficiently rich in time and quality, but that the home language, at least symbolically, is given a place there.

This brings us, perhaps, one small step closer to the dream that Maalouf (1998) cherishes: that we will evolve into a world in which everyone is trilingual. The first language is the mother tongue, which he hopes will not be forgotten, however small the group is in which it is spoken. The second language is one that is chosen because the person is interested in that language and its literature and culture; or because he or she would like to communicate with the people who speak that language. The third language is one that is learned because it is useful; a utilitarian language, the role fulfilled by English in many countries. It is a dream that does full justice to individual character and diversity, but at the same time, averts the fear of the impoverishment of universalism.

Notes

119. According to the Bible's Genesis 11, verses 1-9, the people built a tower in Sinear. They only spoke one language and built the Tower of Babel to reach Heaven. God came among them with the words:

> *'If now, while they are one people, all speaking the same language, they have started to do this, nothing will later stop them from doing whatever they presume to do. Let us then go down there and confuse their language, so that one will not understand what another says. '*

This story is generally considered to be a metaphor for human pride. Many languages are spoken, with all the implicit confusion. However, it can also be seen in a positive light: if people learn to understand each other in spite of language differences, they are capable of creating the greatest structures.

120. A well-known example of this is described by Françoise Dolto. It concerns an old woman who knows that she is dying. She remembers a sentence which she can repeat syllable by syllable without knowing the meaning. When Dolto heard that the lady had lived in India for nine months as an infant, she tried to find out if it could be an Indian language. It seemed that the sentence that the woman 'heard' was the first sentence of an Indian lullaby: 'My darling, with eyes more beautiful than stars ...' (Dolto, 1994).

121. The writer, George Orwell, understood this perfectly and gave us a very famous example in his science fiction novel '1984' with his 'Newspeak' in which the government (Big Brother) creates a new language in order to create a new reality, and a new – limited – form of thinking. For example, a 'joycamp' is a detention camp, there is 'Minipax' (Ministry of Peace, responsible for war) and many other examples, all incorporated in the 'Dictionary of Newspeak' (Orwell, 1948).

122. It must, however, also be noted here that experts who study school failure continually notice that failure is partly caused by the school not taking the cultural differences (both ethnic and socio-economic) sufficiently into account (Bruner, 1996; Biarnès, 1999).

123. In this connection, see the division of the four types of acculturation given by Swyngedouw *et al* (1999) in Chapter Two.

124. If 'learning' is experienced as a betrayal of the culture of origin, then it is not possible to learn. One striking example of this is that research has shown that children of Gypsies and the barge workers who ply the inland waterways of Europe, for example, often score very high on the sections of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale intelligence test that are presented in a somewhat unstructured manner, but fail on sections that demand the same skills and insights but resemble book learning. These children have 'forbidden' themselves to learn. This *analfabétisme de résistance* ('illiteracy due to resistance') is also the reason that there are so many illiterate French speakers (70 percent) in English speaking Ontario, Canada – they refuse to learn to read and write because this means that they would have to learn English (Biarnès, 1999).

125. A particularly interesting theme for a team discussion is the question of whether or not reading aloud in two languages should take place for the whole group, or for both language groups separately.

126. I witnessed a fascinating discussion on this topic between a monolingual Belgian kindergarten teacher and a bilingual Turkish-Belgian colleague. The first teacher explained that she did not think it was a good idea for the language development of the Turkish children at her school if the children spoke Turkish to each other during recess. The second teacher asked her, 'Are you afraid that there is not enough room in their heads for two languages?'

127. It is cynical to conclude that the attention in education for the 'immigrants' own language and culture did not arise until the 1970s after the oil crisis, when there were murmurs about sending them back to their countries of origin (Biarnès, 1999).

Chapter nine

The small world

The childcare centre, the family daycare agency or the kindergarten provides the child's first look at society. It is a small world that previews the big world; a mini-society in all its diversity. At the centre, children receive signals about how society deals with them. If all goes well, children receive the signal that they are welcome. They also receive signals about how society deals with others. In Chapter Five, Derman-Sparks' work was summarised, and the 'Anti-Bias Curriculum' was discussed. As it is an extremely solidly developed vision on how this small world can support multiple identity and the image of the other, this curriculum forms the background and framework of this final, practical chapter.

First, the question of how a group of children can best be equipped to achieve the objectives of multiple identity and self-image development, and the image of 'other', will be examined. These will then be looked in terms of the impact of the physical environment of the group and play material, and their shortcomings. In doing this, it will become apparent that the anti-bias approach affects all areas of education: language acquisition, independence, social skills, creativity, and so on.

In the small world of the institution, we want to make sure that children receive a positive image of dealing with diversity in the big world: the differences between men and women; social origins; family structure; physical attributes; outlook; and so on. This is especially important as, in this big world, these differences are not always dealt with fairly and with respect for everyone's individuality. This has already been discussed under the term *prevailing prejudices* (see Chapter Three). Aboud's social-cognitive development model (1988) has shown us once again that we must be extremely careful with the images presented to toddlers and pre-schoolers because of their strong tendency to conform to societal norms and to those in their environment.

213

Offensive, negative images abound. It seems that things have hardly changed since I was a child, when I was enthralled by Zorro, (an American television hero) who saved damsels in distress and took on the fat, stupid Sergeant Garcia. This enemy always spoke a sort of broken baby talk that revealed his Latino background. Another example is a current popular preschool children's television series in Belgium, 'Pixie plop', where there is only one woman in the cast. Her name is 'Mrs Chatterbox' and that is how she behaves. This is a towering cliché and something to be ashamed of. In the comic book 'The white owl', (Vandersteen, 1950), the main character bumps into a Chinese man and yells: 'Chinaman, what are you doing on my land and on my road?' I would certainly not like to be associated with the image projected of the Chinese in this book – opium smuggling, Mafia members. And so the list goes on. The number of positive images of ethnic minorities, disabled persons or manual labourers on children's television still needs to be addressed in most countries.

When these sorts of images and imbalances are added up, they begin to carry weight. They are subtle mechanisms that give children an image about reality: an image of the *norms* on how one should be; an image of the hierarchy between the better and worse ways to be; an image that gives some children the message that they are 'better' and others that they don't count. These are often unconscious ways in which adults pass on the *prevailing societal norms* (the norms within the whole society) to children (See Chapter Five for more detail). It is important not to adopt these norms in the group. Instead, the group should be situated in such a way that these negativisms are not passed on. ReGeena Booze, a co-worker of Derman-Sparks, explained it as follows:

> ***It is extremely important that children can recognise themselves in the environment in which they are cared for. This is also important for the families. If they cannot recognise themselves or their children here, they can get the feeling that their child is not being treated correctly. It is also important that children see a diversity of people, ethnic groups and languages, because they will meet a variety of people in their lives. If they are familiar with that diversity, then they will not find it shocking or strange to be confronted with it. What we want is for children to learn to respect diversity and not only accept it. It is only when they become familiar with it that they can learn respect (and, therefore, tolerance) (Vandenbroeck, 1998a).***

One important concept here is *racism by omission* (see Chapter Four). If a certain group is systematically invisible or not represented within the institution, this conveys a message about how that group is perceived. If, for example, a classroom in Belgium with Turkish children does not have a single picture of a Turkish family on the walls, if the Turkish language is not visibly present, or the Turkish culture is not represented in any way, this sends a double message. First, to the Turkish children, it says that it is doubtful that it is good to be who they are. An important part of their identity is not being acknowledged by the mini-society of the institution. If this is the case, the parents will rightly wonder whether or not there is enough openness to initiate a dialogue on childrearing practices (see Chapter Seven). Furthermore, they might believe that learning the local culture and language is to reject the home culture (see Chapter Eight). The second message is sent to children of the dominant culture: there is only one way to be – the way they are. In this type of environment, there is a higher chance that children will develop pre-prejudices or misplaced feelings of superiority that will make their contacts with others more difficult. This deprives these children of the chance to learn to 'de-centre' themselves, and it deprives them of the opportunity to learn essential social skills. As a result, it is important to have diversity visible in the environment even when there are no children from ethnic minorities present.

The example of the Turkish family applies, of course, to any group that might not be represented. What kind of message is picked up by an obese child if only 'model types' are displayed in photographs; and what is the message to the group if overweight children are automatically associated with stupidity and gluttony? How does a child of a single mother feel in an environment which always refers to families with fathers and mothers? What messages are children sent about the disabled? It all comes down to creating an environment for children in which there are representations of diversity. Within this, we must make sure that these representations both do justice to the existing diversity and avoid offensive, stereotypes. We must not only avoid *racism by omission*, but also the tourist approach and tokenism (see Chapter Five).

At school, my son did a project on Egypt. In preparation, a great deal of attention was paid to pyramids, mummies and pharaohs, but hardly any attention was given to today's Egyptian culture, let alone to families of Egyptian origin in

Belgium. A few weeks later, we were in Egypt and I asked him if he had learned anything at school about the Egypt of today. He said that he had learned that Egyptians 'ate on the ground'. I asked him, now that we had been in Egypt for three days, if we had eaten on the ground yet? 'No' he answered. Where did he see this? He hadn't seen it himself, but the teacher at school had told him this. This example illustrates that the images that children receive about the unknown are sometimes stronger than actual experience, and therefore, we must be extremely careful how we deal with images.

This chapter will analyse the furnishings, decorations and play material of an institution, with an emphasis on materials that stimulate make-believe. Books and group activities will also be considered. It will, however, become clear that an education in diversity is not about furnishing a classroom, but is the beginning of a much broader approach (Stonehouse, 1991). The visible presence of diversity serves three objectives: the first is about supporting the self-image; the second is about the image that we pass on about the 'other'; and the third is about the concept 'going meta'. This visible diversity becomes the basis for interactions. The value does not lie in the images themselves, but in the manner in which the adults deal with the reactions that children have to them. The objective is that children will ultimately feel that diversity is just a fact of life.

Taking a stand on racism

The first point of interest is the presentation of the surroundings. In nearly every daycare centre, kindergarten or family daycare provider's, there are photos of children on the walls. These are a good place to start a critical examination. Do the photos show stereotyped images? Is the diversity of the environment – the street, neighbourhood, city, and society – represented with respectful photos? One of the difficulties in using photos is that the advertising world – always a supplier of 'beautiful' pictures – photographs ideal families. These consist mainly of families in which mothers take care of the children, although this is gradually changing and the caring man with the bare, muscular torso is becoming more common. In Belgium, they are nearly exclusively white families, never obese, and disabled persons are totally taboo in this ideal – and therefore unrealistic – world.

A popular way to make the diversity present in the group visible is the *family wall*, a wall on which photos (preferably enlargements) are hung of the children

and their families.[128] All the children can easily find themselves on that wall, as well as other families and their diversity. With a family wall, a large degree of diversity is visible: ethnic groups, family composition, clothing, atmosphere, and so on.

For example, Dyvia's photo shows her mother and father, her mother's sister who lives with them and her baby brother. Kevin has two pictures: one with his mother and one with his father and his father's new girlfriend. Kevin lives with his mother one week and with his father the next. The black toddler, Patrice, is sitting between his father and his mother on the couch. They are all dressed up for the picture and the parents are visibly proud of their son. In the middle of the coffee table in front of them is a lace doily with a crystal bowl on it. Femke, her mother and co-mother, are pictured rather nonchalantly in a rather artistic black and white picture. The three of them are sitting on the floor and are obviously enjoying themselves. Youssef's picture show his sister, his father and mother, two aunts, an uncle and his grandmother. They are all standing up straight, side by side and are looking right into the camera. Mathilde is looking at her father, who is looking at her mother. Her mother's eyes are focused on Mathilde so that the effect is the image of a special sort of triangle.

All of these differences are beautiful on the family wall and each of these pictures portrays respect for this diversity. Respect is, of course, not only expressed in the photos, but also and especially in the manner in which the educators deal with diversity and respond to the children's remarks. In this way, the educators do not avoid the differences, but consciously label them – as they do the similarities – which allows them to 'go meta'. The family photos offer the advantage that the diversity is directly linked to the reality of the children present, that there is nothing artificial about them, and as such, they cannot be stereotyped. It is, after all, the families themselves who determine what the photos look like, and how they want to be represented.

Some childcare centres which work with a family wall, sometimes find it difficult to obtain a picture of each family. It is a big help if, for example, a disposable camera is given to the parents and, every time a photo comes back, an enlargement – using a photocopier for example – is made immediately and hung on the wall instead of waiting until all the pictures have been turned in. In

this way, the parents can see how the photos are used. The use of the photos can even be further clarified by taking videos of the activities with the children and showing them at parents' meetings.

From the educators' experience, it also appears that the kinds of photos received depends on the question that is asked. For example, if the parent is asked to 'bring some photos of your child and the people important in his or her life' this emphasises the recognition of the child's significant persons (and the function of the photo as a transitional object); and the result is often separate photos of different people, in which the diversity of the family structure is not visible. If the question focuses on families rather than on individuals, then one gets more complex and realistic pictures.

As an illustration, below is a note that a study group of educators made in connection with the family wall, which was translated into several languages.

> ***We would like you to help us help the children be proud of themselves and, at the same time, have respect for others. One of the ways we want to do this is by making a family wall with pictures of the most important people in the lives of each child. In this way, we can make a 'little bit of home' visible at the daycare centre, and each child can find a bit of security at the centre.***
>
> ***Together, when we look at the family wall, we can all experience the similarities and differences [among us]. These are sometimes strange, sometimes educational and always interesting. We hope that, by doing this, our children will meet life with a more open spirit.***
>
> ***In order to do this, we need your cooperation. We would like to ask you to bring a picture of the family with you. We will then make enlargements and you will get the original back. If this is a problem (if, for example, you don't have a camera) then let ..... know. She can lend you a camera. Many thanks for your cooperation!***

When setting up the family wall, it appears to be useful to note, right at the beginning, what the various people in the photos are called. It should not be

assumed that every mother is called 'mama', nor can all the names of all the brothers, sisters, dogs, aunts and grandfathers be remembered. Children love the family wall. They find it extremely valuable to be able to recognise themselves and their families in the group; even babies react to pictures of people they know; and toddlers often run to the wall to talk about it or just to look.

Sometimes, it will be necessary to augment the pictures of the children at the institution and their families with other pictures in order to give the children a good image of social reality. This is, for example, the case when certain groups are present in the surroundings but not at the daycare centre or at the family daycare provider's. Efforts must then be made to give these groups (for example, minority groups or disabled persons) a place in the institution. However, every time images that are not directly linked to the families are used, care should be taken with regard to stereotyping, and certainly when dealing with children from ethnic subgroups. Obvious sources such as tourist posters and Majority World calendars often contain images of children and adults which do not give a correct picture of how those groups live *here*. What is needed are pictures of children and adults in normal, recognisable, everyday situations: eating, taking baths, having birthday parties, playing, and so on. Such pictures do exist and, at least in Europe, can be obtained from special stores.[129]

Another way to obtain realistic photos is to take the children and a camera on short, regular trips in the neighbourhood. These trips can be a way of experiencing the diversity of the neighbourhood and bringing it back into the centre. This is, of course, not only about the images of ethnic and cultural subgroups, but also about the division of roles between men and women or boys and girls that are depicted in the photographs. The images should be evaluated, and should contain enough diversity so that children have the freedom to personally interpret them.

The presentation of diversity in centres is, of course, not limited to photos. It also includes other decorations. For example, one Brussels' daycare centre uses a great deal of fabric from the countries of origin of the various parents. Because they are dealing with a group of children originating from various places, the result is a colourful collection of Indian, Nepalese, Congolese and other fabrics which are directly linked to the children themselves because it is their parents

who have supplied them. The result can be quite beautiful. However, feelings about the visual result can vary, and differences of opinion can occur when the parents are involved in the decorating – what is messy for one is warm and friendly for another and so on.

An example of a difference in opinion took place in a Ghent daycare centre, where there was a discussion about carpets. For one group of parents, it was unacceptable for the babies to simply be put on the bare floor. They felt it was too unfriendly and 'distant'. They wanted to have a carpet and were even prepared to supply one themselves. The educators and a few of the other parents felt that this was highly unhygienic and against the regulations. A baby could have diarrhoea or could vomit for example, and the carpet would have to be cleaned.

There is no point in trying to avoid differences of opinion at any cost. The exact outcome of the discussion is of less importance than the discussion itself: how it is carried out, and how a confrontation leads to a childrearing practice that takes various sensitivities into account. Thus, the carpet discussion became an example of positive coexistence, and for including the parents' opinions when furnishing the centre. Family daycare providers often have more difficulty doing this as the children's play area is the living space of their own home.

Finally, the decoration – the presentation – of the space also sends a message to the parents. In the chapter 'Parents about the house' (Chapter Seven), we have already explained that changing the presentation can result in the parents becoming more actively involved. In the chapter 'The Tower of Babel' (Chapter Eight), we used the example of the 'Good Morning' poster that symbolises respect for different languages. Another example, could be a multilingual welcome poster or a poster on the Rights of the Child in places that are highly visible, such as the entrance. Such symbols can have an effect, and is the reason why many centres and daycare providers choose to hang up symbolic images.

Pretending

Many authors have pointed out that free play is a necessity for identity development. Playing make-believe is one means of obtaining a good idea of 'who I am'. In this game, children experiment with roles, and therefore, gradually

become aware that roles exist. To begin with, these roles include boys or girls, mothers or fathers or children. Later, they become roles that are further removed from daily life such as cartoon characters, a policeman or policewoman, and so on. Toddlers and young preschool children, however, mainly portray concrete scenes from their daily lives and immediate surroundings. It is a fundamental form of play and true make-believe has, therefore, the following characteristics:

- ***it is absorbing for the child;***[130]
- ***it is a complex, heterogeneous experience to 'replay' the world as it had been experienced;***
- ***it is not simply repeating, but also 'transforming' reality, according to the wishes and desires of the child;***
- ***it is ultimately also a 'variation': a copy that is never identical to reality. In this way, the children experience that there are alternatives and that they can have different attitudes towards a situation. This is an essential aspect of role-playing that makes it*** dramatic ***as well as fun.***

This type of role-playing makes an important contribution to the development of identity. Many renowned developmental psychologists [such as Bruner (1996)] have, for example, studied the 'peek-a-boo' game (whereby children or adults hide their faces with their hands, for example, and when they show their faces say 'peek-a-boo!') and how children discover that they can be an active partner in role-play. Somewhat later as toddlers, children choose more active roles (playing boys or girls, for example) and, in this way, gradually give the identity more subtle aspects, identifying themselves with increasingly complex characters. It is a playful quest for an identity in a social environment with an infinite number of variations and possible identities.

Many researchers have demonstrated how the development of thinking coincides with an evolution in role-play, in which children gradually develop the roles more precisely and can, increasingly, empathise with other roles. The child's role-play with others also becomes increasingly complex (Berg, 1999). Close observations in childcare centres have shown that even toddlers can

differentiate perfectly between the fiction of make-believe, and reality; that they can already re-enact complex situations (going to the market and making dinner, for example); and that children from the age of two are already capable of substituting an actual object for a symbolic (play) one. However, what is more significant is that children as young as 18 months old gradually start playing in pairs (and sometimes in threes) and that they – as young as they are – influence each other in the roles that they have taken and, through this influence, construct a sort of 'story'.

The exchange among toddlers occurs primarily through play material. From observations, it appears that the play material (cups, mugs, spoons, and so on) determines the type of game that develops and the dialogue among the children (Musatti, 1983). The 'cognitive' authors who emphasise 'learning' through Piaget's concepts, also attach a great deal of significance to the type of play material made available to children because this determines their learning opportunities (King *et al*, 1994).

As identity development and the image of the 'other' are two of the most important themes, attention needs to be given to the play materials. The 'make-believe corner', which may have dolls, kitchens or a little shop, are all exceptionally well suited to this fundamentally important type of playing. They imitate reality and encourage make-believe. Therefore, we must be extremely aware of the reality that is imitated. There is a danger that the imitated reality is one-sided and that the *prevailing prejudices* are reinforced. Therefore, first of all, it should be ensured that the play material correctly reflects the reality of the children in the group. The kitchen should contain utensils that are familiar. If, for example, there are children who are used to seeing a wok in their kitchens at home, then there should be a toy wok in the toy kitchen. If not, the kitchen loses its function. Second, beyond the children in the group, the wider surroundings need to be represented: the street, neighbourhood, district and city. Make-believe toys that stimulate the imagination and reflect cultural diversity are available, although they can be quite expensive in countries with a limited demand for such products.

Dolls are an essential tool for role-playing among young children. Here, too, the diversity should be reflected. While white, African or Asian dolls are readily

available, dolls with Mediterranean or North African features are more difficult to find, although they do exist.[131] Rag dolls are also made with various skin colours. When buying dolls, one should make sure that the differentiating characteristics are respectfully and correctly represented. It is not desirable to have dolls dressed in their traditional, stereotypical, festival clothes. Even though they are often readily available, these dolls are in no way a correct representation of the diversity in our society.

This brings us to clothing. A box of dressing-up clothes is often a traditional item for make-believe. Marjan Stufkens (1993) of the Meander Foundation in the Netherlands, strongly supports using intercultural play material but is cautious with dressing-up clothes. Her main argument is that adults are not always in control of how the children and their parents deal with these clothes. Will a child who puts on a *djellaba* be asked by a parent who just walks in, 'Are you Moroccan?' Does every Dutch or Turkish parent want his or her child to be dressed like that? While it is important to work towards tolerant reactions, Stufkens doubts if dressing-up will do that. She also gives the example of a Turkish parent who was offended because the special clothing for a circumcision celebration was simply dumped into the box of creased dressing-up clothes. For these reasons, Stufkens prefers to work with hats, purses, shoes and scarves, simply because these are nice additions (Stufkens, 1993). A collection of clothes brought by the parents will not to lead as quickly to stereotyping.

We should certainly critically examine any play material for diversity that children use for make-believe to create their world. It is not well known that large manufacturers often have multi-coloured models[132], and models of disabled persons. Equally, the little store that may be in a corner of the classroom should have products that correctly reflect the neighbourhood. It might be an idea to do some real shopping in the neighbourhood so that there are real products for the make-believe store.

Respect for diversity is not only expressed in the types of toys offered but also in the way they are presented to the children. Boys and girls being offered different toys is hopefully a thing of the past, even though we still do come across an educator now and then who is afraid that a boy will become homosexual if he plays a lot with dolls. Preschool children can hurt each other in their make-

believe games. If a boy is shut out of the doll corner because his female classmates feel that he does not belong there, or if the boys play the boss and the girls get too little space to develop their own roles, then the educators will have to mediate. They can also mediate if they notice that the boys, for example, show too little interest in this corner of the room. While it is pointless to force boys to play in the doll corner against their will, the corner can be made more attractive to them by adding other toys that are more popular, or by adding a few typically 'male' props.

Books

Avoiding stereotypes and bringing in diversity not only applies to playing make-believe, but also to other play materials that contain images. In puzzles, for example, a critical look must be taken: are all the doctors, firemen and policemen white males? Are women still depicted in cooking and cleaning roles? Are ethnic minorities still rare? In the case of books, books are a window to the world and allow a reliving of familiar situations and a broadening of horizons by talking about unfamiliar situations. But what kind of world does the book depict?

The first thing that can be done is screening the available children's books for stereotyping. Derman-Sparks & the ABC Task Force (1989) have a number of useful tips on how to do this. The key is to check the books to make sure that there are no oversimplified generalisations of certain groups: the vicious member of the Chinese mafia; the evil blind man; the silly girl who is only interested in her dolls; the wily Arab with a knife between his teeth; the stupid black guy who can't utter one civilised word; the poor Third World child who needs our pity in order to survive. Shockingly, each of these extreme examples – and many more – can still be frequently found in comic books and children's books.

Books written before the 1970s should especially be analysed carefully. At this time, people were not as conscious of aspects that might stimulate prejudice. When members of subgroups (ethnic minorities, disabled persons, obese people, children with glasses, and so on) are portrayed, are they real figures with their own personalities and characters, or are they only facades, props and second-class characters? Who determines the action in the story? Is it always the boys

230

who make the clever discoveries and who determine the direction of the plot? Do the girls have an active role or are they weak little things, full of self-pity, hopefully waiting for their knights in shining armour? Is it thanks to the white men in the story that all ends well or do others also have something to add? Are the women only portrayed as mothers or witches?

Books that contain such coarse stereotypes should be taken away from the toddlers. For preschool children, however, Derman-Sparks & the ABC Task Force feel that they can still serve a function, even if it is only as didactic material (with the guidance of the educator) to show the children what a prejudice or a stereotype is, so that the children themselves will gradually be able to discover such unfair representations.

Once the books have been checked, it is useful to think about adding others that give a positive role to the groups that, as yet, have not been represented. Does each child in the group have recognisable characters with whom he or she can identify? Are there enough characters represented to give the children a picture of the diversity in society? In the last few years, a large number of good books for toddlers and young children has been published that meet these criteria perfectly. Many ordinary children's books contain enough diversity of pictures of children and adults in recognisable, daily situations; and, there are also books with the explicit theme 'dealing with diversity'. These days they can be easily found in good bookstores in Europe.

In addition, many institutions are choosing to augment their existing libraries with home-made books. This is not only cheaper, but it gives them the opportunity to create 'made to measure' stories that can be adjusted to fit the actual group at a certain moment in time. One Brussels' daycare centre made a beautiful book for very young children based on colour copies of the children's photos. On every left page, there is a picture of one of the children in the group in his or her bed. On the right page is a picture of the child's favourite toy. The book is one of the most popular ones in the centre. Further examples include a Ghent daycare centre that made a splendid book about food. Every page has close-ups of very diverse types of home-made food as well as pictures of various families eating. One kindergarten class made a beautiful storybook about bread. Based on pictures taken during field trips with the children in the school

neighbourhood, pictures were gathered of 10 different kinds of bread and how they are used in various situations.

The list of possibilities is endless. The underlying theme is the attempt to connect the photos and pictures to something that is real for the children, something that they are involved in. It is important to remember that the function of all play materials and books is always that they are recognisable for each child; that the image of others is presented; and the possibility is there to talk about diversity (going meta). The photos are, moreover, also an interesting discussion point when talking to parents about what is happening in the group.

Activities

The types of activities undertaken are a significant way in which an institution shapes its small world. In a book of practice (Boudry & Vandenbroeck, 2001), kindergarten teacher Caroline Boudry gives an extensive overview of more than 40 activities which she tested on toddlers and preschool children.[133] Each of these activities directly contributes, in one way or another, to the image that children create of themselves and of the 'other'. The activities stimulate the carers to go meta because they provide them with the opportunity to reshape the budding knowledge of children. Activities with materials described above are also explained and developed in this book.

In the same vein, there are a range of simple activities that can stimulate children's positive self-image or a positive image of the diversity in the group. These include, for example, activities working with mirrors, one's shadow, and using one's own body, such as combing one's hair. It is fascinating how everyone's hair looks and feels different and often even demands different kinds of combs and brushes. Other activities demand more specialised material, such as skin colour paint which consists of different colours for the skin, ranging from pale pink through various ochre colours to deep brown. This fascinating material encourages toddlers and preschool children, through play, to deal with their first realisations of variations in skin colour. This demands, of course, an educator with enough self-confidence to be able to deal with the children's remarks. For this reason, some educators resist using this material because of their fear of hurtful comments and insecurity on how to deal with the subject.

Under the subtitle 'colour blindness' in Chapter Five 'Two sides of the Ocean', we deal with this resistance in greater detail.

The MEQ project's use of such materials has taught us that toddlers as young as two or three years old already clearly notice differences in skin colour. Children, in particular, who have a skin colour that is different from the majority in the institution, appear to experience this type of material as an acknowledgement. Older children (five to seven year olds, for example) often want to portray themselves or their role models in their drawings and paintings. For them, it is also important that they have the colours available to be able to do this, so that there are no subtle, unintentional messages passed on to them about particular skin colours. Fortunately, the time has now passed when kindergarten teachers were taught not to give children brown or black because these colours were depressing.

The Boudry and Vandenbroeck book also suggests a range of art activities, inspired by various cultural expressions through the work of modern artists from various ethnic minorities. Many kindergartens carry out creative activities on a project basis, deciding upon the theme with the group. Then, over the space of one or more weeks, a series of activities are planned based on this theme. This educational practice is becoming increasingly common and allows the educators to draw upon the children's experiences as a starting point.

We must not overlook the fact that the educator plays a role in influencing the choice of theme. While it may appear that the themes always reflect the interests of all the children, in reality, there is very often a sort of selection mechanism at work set in motion by the teacher. How else can it be explained that the themes under the guidance of one particular teacher – who is very socially aware – have a high degree of social relevance while this is not the case with other teachers? All teachers, however, claim that the themes were suggested by the children. It is possible that they are both right, but the children learn quickly what sorts of questions, concerns and experiences are considered to be valid and which are not.

An example of this is when I brought my son to kindergarten one Monday morning. I asked him which theme he would like to propose for the next group

discussion. He answered that he wasn't going to suggest a theme because nothing special happened over the weekend. I reminded him that we had gone to vote in the municipal referendum concerning a new transportation plan banning automobile traffic from the city centre, and that we had had a whole discussion about the plans and their affects on both of us. My son answered without hesitation that this was not the kind of experience that the teacher meant.

In a speech at the opening of the Reggio Emilia daycare centre exhibition in 1998 in Amsterdam, American developmental psychologist Lilian Katz talked about 'the important theme of the theme'. She argued that a differentiation should be made between children's 'interest' and their 'curiosity'. She argued that all too often, the themes in kindergartens are based on superficial curiosity; and that this is why there are more themes on dolphins, panda bears and windmills than themes that deal with deeper interests. It is however, not the social relevance of the themes themselves that is important, but the manner in which the educational objectives within each theme are, or are not, dealt with. Each theme should promote discussion on thinking about thinking (going meta). Themes certainly contain possible leads for working with opposing viewpoints: whether the theme is about pirates or knights, there are always ways of confronting children with different viewpoints and discussing them.

One final point of interest is 'homework'. Children are often asked to bring things from home (pictures about a theme, for example), and it is striking that the same children continually have difficulty complying with the school's expectations because their parents do not subscribe to the typically middle-class magazines in which the relevant photos can be found, or because the library is not part of the home culture. The school should, therefore, make sure that there are sufficient sources of information within the school itself so that unintentional discrimination along socio-economic or cultural lines does not take place.

In conclusion

These examples, from the decorations to play materials to daily activities, show how educators, often unconsciously, pass their view of the world onto children. The self-image and the image of the 'other' form the core of the educational

234

process, and it permeates all aspects of this process. Becoming aware of one's own view of the world – and, therefore, of the view that one passes on – is a prerequisite for critically evaluating one's own practices and, where necessary, adjusting them. Good training programmes for educators often begin with this view of the world before approaching more practical aspects (for example, see Derman-Sparks & the ABC Task Force, 1989; Gaine and van Keulen, 1997 for childcare centres; Jones, 1997; Khoshkhesal, 1996 for family daycare providers).

Notes

128. Examples of a family wall and of interactions with children about pictures can be found in the videos 'How good it is to be you!' (Peeters & Vandenbroeck, 1998a) and 'Respect voor diversiteit in de kinderopvang. Ervaringen met intercultureel werken in de Vlaamse kinderopvang' ('Respect for diversity in childcare. Experiences with intercultural works in Flemish childcare') (Peeters, 1997).

129. Well known manufacturers are, for example, NES Arnold (Nottingham, UK) and Lakeshore (California, USA). It is no coincidence that such products come primarily from Anglo-Saxon areas, where there is a long tradition of this anti-bias approach. This also means though that the groups most common in the Anglo-Saxon world are the ones most often portrayed in the materials. In these countries there is also a wide range of specialist companies and foundations (such as EYTARN in London). A fairly extensive review can be found in Brown (1998).

130. Involvement is – together with well-being – a key factor for assessing quality among toddlers and preschool children. This was concluded in an extensive study within the framework of Ervaringsgericht Kleuteronderwijs ('Experience-oriented preschool education') (Laevers & Van Sanden, 1996; Laevers et al, 1993).

131. For example, see 'Children of Our World dolls' by NES Arnold.

132. Such as Duplo, Dacta, Playmobile, and Little Tikes. ASCO Educational Supplies (Leeds, UK) and others also offer a whole range of positive images in puzzles.

133. Caroline Boudry has worked for many years as a nursery school teacher at the University of Ghent daycare centre. She also works at the Centre for Education and Childcare where she provides training sessions on, among other subjects, activities with toddlers and preschool children. Within the framework of the VBJK, she has taken part in the DECET network. The practical book under discussion is 'Spiegeltje, spiegeltje ...' by Boudry and Vandenbroeck (see Sources).

236

MOUNTAIN
Garments
Player

Appendix

The right to respect

On 20 November 1989, the Generally Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It has been ratified in every country of the world with the exception of Somalia and the United States of America. In most cases, the Convention was ratified with great deal of enthusiasm. The Convention is, after all, unique in its approach to the child as the bearer of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. It signifies a mission and a mandate for every childcare institution and for every school. Its mission is non-discrimination, regardless of what the management or the personnel of the institution feel about it themselves, and a mandate, regardless of what consumers think about it.

The Convention contains a few articles that are of particular interest because they address the issue of dealing with diversity. We would therefore like to provide a short overview in this appendix of the articles that are of immediate relevance to the various themes in this book.

One of the most important articles in the Convention is Article 2, in which it is stated that all forms of discrimination against children is unacceptable:

> ***... irrespective of the child's or his or her parents' or legal guardians' race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.***

Article 7 states that the child has the right to his or her own name and a nationality. and Article 8 describes: 'the right of the child to preserve his or her identity.'

Interestingly, diversity is extremely broadly described in the Convention. This is as it should be. It is about diversity in cultural backgrounds – but also about diversity in social settings, between boys and girls, among children with a physical or other disability, and all the other ways in which children differ from each other. Article 2 is very clear about this: we are to take these differences into account, while Article 14 of the Convention goes further and describes: 'the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, subject to suitable direction of the parents and the national laws.' This means that, in education, we will have to take the diversity of views and values of the parents into account.

As far as education is concerned, opinions are enormously varied. Many couples can hardly agree between themselves about 'what is good for the children'. One can easily imagine that professional educators who deal with a great many families, also have to deal with a great diversity of views and values on childrearing and education. The parents' ideas may be determined by their own upbringing and education, by their religion or philosophical backgrounds, by their own experiences, and so on. According to this Convention, we have to take all of this into account. Various articles of the Convention emphasise parental involvement. Article 5 requires us to 'respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents or, where applicable, the members of the extended family or community as provided for by the local custom …' The Convention also clearly states that the parents are jointly primarily responsible for raising their children; that sometimes the extended family is involved and that the State is to support them in this task. It goes without saying that well thought out childcare is one of the principle means for the State to carry out this function – which it is required to provide according to the Convention.

From the above articles, we can already deduce a few things about the respect that we must have for diversity. But Article 20 deals specifically with children who need – temporarily or permanently – to be cared for outside the family. Here, it is explicitly stated: 'When considering solutions, due regard shall be paid to the desirability of continuity in a child's upbringing and to the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background.'

Points (c) and (d) of Article 29 provides clear guidelines for education which is to be geared towards:

c) the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilisations different from his or her own;

d) the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society; in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin.

Article 30 goes on to add the rights of children from ethnic minorities and the original population to practice their own culture and religion, and to use their own language.

When considering all these articles, one can do no less than ask a number of questions about the organisation of care for infants and young children. There can be no doubt that one must take the diversity of the children and their families into account, that diversity in social origin, gender, religion, culture, native language, and so on must be treated with respect. Numerous other international conventions and texts make this perfectly clear.[134] But how does one start? What does it mean to deal respectfully with diversity? A convention such as the one on the Rights of the Child must remain rather vague about the concrete details because it is to be applied in most countries. If we look closer to home, we will find various regulations, recommendations and instructions which can serve as a framework to help interpret the Convention more concretely. At the European level, these recommendations have also been set up in this manner.

European targets

In 1986, the European Commission established a Network on Childcare[135] as a section of the Action Programme for Equal Opportunities of the European Union. This network, which consisted of experts from all member states, published a report in 1996 in which 40 targets were listed on the quality of provisions, among which were daycare centres and kindergartens for young children. The provisions are financed with government funds, and are to meet these targets within 10 years in all EU member states. Several of these targets deal with how institutions should deal with diversity, including:

> **Target 14: All services should positively assert the value of diversity and make provision for both children and adults which acknowledges and supports diversity of language, ethnicity, religion, gender and disability, and challenging stereotypes.**

Here we see that the Network on Childcare uses an extremely broad definition of diversity which we previously saw in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Along with requiring provisions to support the identity of the children, we also see the targets to combat stereotyping and, thus, prejudice. The network aims to help children to create a positive self-image, including a positive image of their own cultural backgrounds, and to help them deal respectfully with those from other backgrounds. Both of these points return in Targets 16-18, which state that every provision must have an explicitly formulated educational or childrearing philosophy. These are we have called, throughout 'The view of the Yeti', an 'educational concept' or what is sometimes called a 'quality document'. The report by the Network lists a few points which need to be stated in an educational concept. The first two are (Target 18):

- **the child's autonomy and concept of self;**
- **convivial social relationships between children, and children and adults.**

We see that both of these points of interest – one's own identity and dealing with others – are made explicit.

Just as in the Convention, this European document strongly emphasises the fact that the provisions are to take into account the norms, values and customs of the home culture, as well as the importance of parental involvement. This is also expressed in the following targets.

> *Target 20: the education and learning environment should reflect and value each child's family, home, language, cultural heritage, beliefs, religion and gender.*

> *Target 34: Parents are collaborators and participants in early years services. As such, they have a right to give and receive information and the right to*

> ***express their views both formally and informally. Finally, the decision-making process of the services should be fully participative, involving parents, all staff, and where possible, children.***

In the explanation accompanying these targets, there is explicit reference to the work of the French *crèche parentales*, which have been discussed in detail in earlier chapters of *The view of the Yeti*.

> ***Target 35: Services should have formal and informal links with the local community or communities or district.***

> ***Target 36: Services should adopt employment procedures which emphasise the importance of recruiting employees who reflect the ethnic diversity of the local community.***

In summary, we see that the Convention on the Rights of the Child imposes a certain framework on the provisions within which diversity is to be respected. At the European level, the Network on Childcare formulates recommendations which develop this concept somewhat more concretely, but which are completely in line with it.

A first important point that should be added is that diversity covers many different aspects: ethnicity and culture, but also gender, social class, physical characteristics, and so on. This means that the term 'respect for diversity' is a good deal broader than 'intercultural'.

A second point is that respect for diversity is a function of the development of children and, in particular, the development of their self-image and learning to deal with differences. This concurs with what was called educating children for self-awareness and community.

A third point is that the manner in which this is developed must take the local community and the parents into account. The diversity of parents and childrearing practices will, in other words, influence the practices at the daycare centre or kindergarten.

Notes

134. There are several international conventions, including the 'Declaration on race and racial prejudice' from 'The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation'(Paris, 27 November, 1978). Article 5.2 reads:

> *States ... as well as all other competent authorities and the entire teaching profession, have a responsibility to see that the educational resources of all countries are used to combat racism, more especially by ensuring that curricula and textbooks include scientific and ethical considerations concerning human unity and diversity and that no invidious distinctions are made with regard to any people; by training teachers to achieve these ends ...*

135. The official name of the network is: European Commission Network on Childcare and other measures to reconcile Employment and Family Responsibilities.

Sources

Aboud F (1988) *Children and Prejudice*; Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

Ackaert L, and Deschouwer K (1999) 'De relatie tussen taal en identiteit bij Brusselse migranten' in M Swyngedouw, K Phalet and K Deschouwer (Eds.) *Minderheden in Brussel. Sociopolitieke houdingen en gedragingen*; VUBPress, Brussels.

Ahrweiler H (1999) 'La peur de l'autre' in *Internationale de l'imaginaire N°10. Nous et les autres. Les cultures contre le racisme* pp 43-49; Babel, Maisons des cultures du monde, Arles.

Alibhai-Brown Y (1993) 'Jonge kinderen en bestrijding van racisme' in F de Graaff and A van Keulen (Eds.) *Intercultureel opvoeden*; SWP, Utrecht.

Ariès P (1987) *De ontdekking van het kind: sociale geschiedenis van school en gezin*; Bakker, Amsterdam.

Avenue (1995) 'Hollandse Nieuwe. Allochtonen en hun invloed', Year 2/4; De Geïllustreerde Pers, Amsterdam.

Baekelmans R (1993) 'Inspiratiebronnen' in Baekelmans *et al* (Ed.) *Werken aan een betere kinderopvang. Rapport over dertien jaar onderzoek en vorming met de steun van de Bernard van Leer Foundation en Kind en Gezin*; VBJK, Ghent.

Baudelot O (1998) 'Implication, partenariat ou coéducation avec les parents dans le préscolaire?' in *Actes du colloque international sur l'éducation préscolaire. Problématiques et perspectives. Novembre 1997*; ATFALE/Bernard van Leer Foundation/Service Culturel de l'Ambassade de France au Maroc, Rabat.

Beach AN (1998) *Experiences with anti-bias in Sweden*; paper presented at the Training of the trainers course on education without prejudice; DECET-VBJK, Ghent.

Belgisch Comité voor UNICEF (date unknown) *Kinderrechten: een taak voor iedereen. Vormingsmap over de Rechten van het Kind*; Belgisch Comité voor UNICEF, Brussels.

Ben Soussan P (1999) 'De la difficulté d'être parents ...' in *La Gazette des Collectifs Enfants Parents Professionnels* no. 64, pp. 8-9; ACEPP, Paris.

Berg L-E (1999) 'Developmental play stages in child identity construction: an interactionist theoretical contribution' in *International Journal of Early Childhood* vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 11-24; ENSAC, Canterbury.

Biarnès J (1999) *Universalité, diversité, sujet dans l'espace pédagogique*; L'Harmatan, Paris.

Biller HB and Kimpton JL (1997) 'The father and the school-aged child' in Lamb ME (Ed.) *The role of the father in child development*; John Wiley and Sons, New York.

Billiet J and Witte H de (1995) 'Attitudinal dispositions to vote for a "new" extreme right-wing party: The case of "Vlaams Blok"' in *European Journal of Political Research* 27, pp. 181-202, Kluwer, Dordrecht.

Blanc M-C (1994) 'Het aanleren van verdraagzaamheid: moeilijkheden, belang en strategieën' in Vandenbroeck M (Ed.) *Empowering the parents. ENSAC 5th international congress*; VBJK-Kind en Gezin, Ghent.

Borghs P (1998) *Juridische aspecten van homoseksueel ouderschap*; Mys and Breesch, Ghent.

Boszormenyi-Nagy I and Krasner BR (1994) *Tussen geven en nemen. Over contextuele therapie*; De Toorts, Haarlem.

Boudry C and Vandenbroeck M (2001) *Spiegeltje, spiegeltje*; SWP, Utrecht.

Bourdieu P (1993) *La misère du monde*; Seuil, Paris.

Bouwer E and Vedder P (1995) *Kleine verschillen. Intercultureel werken in de kinderopvang*; De Tijdstroom, Utrecht.

Bouwmeester M, Dekovic M and Groenendaal H (1998) *Opvoeding in Somalische vluchtelingengezinnen in Nederland*; van Gorcum, Assen.

Brady P (1996) 'The journey towards anti-racist identity for multi-racial people, people of color and whites' in *The Web*, April 1996 pp. 9-13; ABC Task Force, Pasadena.

Brewaeys A (1997) 'Lesbisch ouderschap. Resultaten van een Belgische follow-up studie' in CGSO. *Jaarboek 1998. Seksualiteit, relaties, geboorteregeling*; CGSO, Ghent.

Brown Babette (1998) *Unlearning discrimination in the early years*; Trentham Books, London.

Bruner J (1996) *The culture of education*; Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA.

Burghes L, Clarke L and Cronin N (1997) *Father and fatherhood in Britain*; Family Policy Studies Centre, London.

Burman E (1994) *Deconstructing developmental psychology*; Routledge, London.

Buysse B (1999) *Jaarverslag 1998. Het kind in Vlaanderen*; Kind en Gezin, Brussels.

Cacace M and d'Andrea L (1996) *Fathers in services for young children. Handbook on good practice in sharing responsibilities between men and women*; Centro di Cooperazione Familiare, Rome.

Catherine L (1997) *Islam voor ongelovigen*; EPO, Amsterdam; Babylon-De Geus, Berchem.

Chaouite A (1996) 'Être père. Représentations en exil' in *Le Furet, Revue de la Petite Enfance et de l'intégration* no. 19, pp. 25-27; Le Furet, Strasbourg.

Chaouite A (1997) 'L'arbitraire et la loi. Langues et fonctions parentales' in *Le Furet, Revue de la Petite Enfance et de l'intégration* no 22 pp. 18-19; Le Furet, Strasbourg.

Claus H (1999) *Het huis van de liefde*; De Bezige Bij, Amsterdam.

Combes J (1990) *Les structures d'accueil pour enfants à participation parentale en milieu interculturel*; ACEPP, Paris.

Combes J (1991) *Structures d'accueil des jeunes enfants en milieu interculturel. De l'expérimentation à l'assainage*; ACEPP, Paris.

Coninck H de (1994) *Intimiteit onder de melkweg. Over poëzie*; De Arbeiderspers, Amsterdam/Antwerpen.

Cornelissens A (Ed.) (date unknown) *Hand in hand. Informatie voor ouders*; Kinderdagverblijf Studentenvoorzieningen Universiteit Gent, Ghent.

216

Craen P van de (1999) 'Gerapporteerd taalgebruik en gerapporteerde taalvaardigheid van migranten in Brussel' in Swyngedouw M, Phalet K and Deschouwer K (Eds.) *Minderheden in Brussel. Sociopolitieke houdingen en gedragingen*; VUBPress, Brussels.

Dahlberg G, Moss P, and Pence A (1999) *Beyond quality in early childhood education and care: postmodern perspectives*; Falmer Press, London.

David M and Appell G (1973) *Lóczy ou le maternage insolite*; Scarabée, Paris.

Derman-Sparks L (1998a) *'Race': a politically constructed concept*; paper presented at the Training of the Trainers Course on Education without Prejudice, DECET-VBJK, Ghent.

Derman-Sparks L (1998b) *Defining ethnicity and culture*; paper presented at the Training of the Trainers Course on Education without Prejudice, DECET-VBJK, Ghent.

Derman-Sparks L (1998c) 'Het ontstaan van vooroordelen bij jonge kinderen' in Somers A (Ed.) *Respect voor diversiteit in de kinderopvang*; Ghent, VBJK.

Derman-Sparks L and Brunson Phillips C (1997) *Teaching/Learning Anti-Racism. A developmental approach*; Teachers College Press, New York.

Derman-Sparks L and the ABC Task Force (1989) *Anti-Bias Curriculum. Tools for empowering young children*; National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington DC.

Distelbrink M (1998) *Opvoeding in Surinaams-Creoolse gezinnen in Nederland*; van Gorcum, Assen.

Djaïdani R (1999) *Boumkoeur*; Editions du Seuil, Paris.

Dolto F (1984) *L'image inconsciente du corps*; Editions du Seuil, Paris.

Dolto F (1985) *La cause des enfants*; Robert Laffont, Paris.

Dolto F (1994) *Articles et conférences 1. Les étappes majeures de l'enfance*; Gallimard, Paris.

Dumon W (Ed.) (1995) *Gezien het gezin. Feiten en waarden*; Davidsfonds/Universitaire Pers, Leuven.

Eijkeren M van (1993) 'Tweerichtingsverkeer met ouders: Het belang van goed contact' in Hol A and Rusch A (Eds.) *Kinderopvang als beroep. Handboek voor opleiding en praktijk*; Academische uitgeverij, Amersfoort.

Erikson E (1971) *Identiteit, jeugd en crisis*; Het Spectrum, Aula, Utrecht.

European Commission Network for Childcare (1996) *Quality targets for services for young children*; Brussels.

European Community Directorate of Social Affairs (1993) *The European and the family*; Eurobarometer 39, European Commission DG5, Brussel.

Ferri E and Smith K (1996) *Parenting in the 1990s. Family and Parenthood. Policy and Practice*; Family Policy Studies Centre, London.

Flising L (1992) 'The relations between parents and school, preschool and school-age childcare centres' in ENSAC (Ed.) *The children's experience. Third European Conference on School-Age Childcare*; Thomas Coram Research Unit, London.

Forna A (1999) *De mythe van het moederschap. Hoe de maatschappij vrouwen vormt en vervormt*; Luitingh-Sijthoff, Amsterdam.

François K (1996) *Coëducatie en communicatie. Een exploratief onderzoek naar de gendereffecten in de communicatie interactie bij een sekse-gemengde kleutergroep*; Universitaire Instelling Antwerpen, Antwerp.

Freire P (1970) *Pedagogy of the oppressed*; Herder and Herder, New York.

Gaine B and Keulen A van (1997) *Anti-Bias Training Approaches in the Early Years. A guide for trainers and teachers*; MUTANT, Utrecht and EYTARN, London.

Geense P and Pels T (1998) *Opvoeding in Chinese gezinnen in Nederland*; van Gorcum, Assen.

248

Golding W (1954) *Lord of the Flies*; Faber and Faber, London.

Graaff F de (1995) *Zorg aan buitenlanders? Deel van mijn vak;* Bureau Voorlichting Gezondheidszorg, Utrecht.

Graaff F de and Keulen A van (Eds.) (1993) *Intercultureel opvoeden*; SWP, Utrecht.

Graaff F de, Hol A, and Keulen A van (1990) *Intercultureel leren en doen! Basiscursus intercultureel werken*; NIZW, Utrecht.

Green A (1977) 'Atome de parenté et relations oedipiennes' in Lévi-Strauss C (Ed.) *L'identité*; Presses Universitaires de France, Paris.

Halimi G (1999) 'Le paramètre de la dignité humaine' in *Internationale de l'imaginaire N° 10. Nous et les autres. Les cultures contre le racisme* pp 33-42; Babel, Maisons des cultures du monde, Arles.

Harris JR (1998) *The nurture assumption*; Bloomsbury, London.

Hergé (1960) *Tintin au Tibet*; Casterman, Tournai.

Hermanns JMA (1992) *Het sociale kapitaal van jonge kinderen*; SWP, Utrecht.

Heyting F (1999) 'Participatie en autonomie' in Somers A *Kind in de eenentwintigste eeuw*; VBJK, Ghent.

Hintjens R (1996) 'Ouders en opvang' in Peeters J (Ed.) *Kind aan huis. Een handboek voor medewerkers kinderopvang*; VBJK, Ghent.

Hoffman E and Arts W (1994) *Interculturele gespreksvoering*; Bohn Stafleu Van Loghum, Houten-Zaventem.

Hollands M (1998) *Nieuwe Ruimte. Integratie als avontuur*; Jan van Arkel, Utrecht.

Hoogsteder M and Bakx H (1998) 'Je bent geen moeder of vader, je wordt er een' in gesprek met Ruth de Kanter in *Ouderschap and Ouderbegeleiding*; Year 1, April 1998, pp 69-73; SWP, Utrecht.

243

Houwer A de (1998) 'Deux langues ou pus pour le jeune enfant: une contribution à la réflexion sur le bilinguisme' in *Le Furet, Revue de la Petite Enfance et de l'intégration* no. 26, pp. 4-5; Le Furet, Strasbourg.

IJzendoorn MH van, Tavecchio LWC, Goossens FA and Vergeer MM (1982) *Opvoeden in geborgenheid: Een kritische analyse van Bowlby's attachmenttheorie*; Van Loghum Slaterus, Deventer.

Jones K (1997) *Anti-Bias in action. Fair Play. Training manual*; Lady Gowrie Child Centre, Sydney.

Juffer F (1993) *Verbonden door adoptie. Een experimenteel onderzoek naar hechting en competentie in gezinnen met een adoptiebaby*; Academische Uitgeverij, Amersfoort.

Juillard C (1997) *L'éducation de la petite enfance: problématiques et perspectives*; ACEPP, Paris.

Juillard C (1998) 'Les parents citoyens' in Vandenbroeck M (Ed.) *Respect voor diversiteit in de kinderopvang. CD-Rom*; MEQ-VBJK, Ghent.

Keulen A van (1993) 'Kleuren en culturen: Intercultureel werken in de kinderopvang' in Hol A and Rusch A (Eds.) *Kinderopvang als beroep: Handboek voor opleiding en praktijk*; Academische Uitgeverij, Amersfoort.

Keulen A van, Graaff F de and Hol A (1991) *Intercultureel management in kindercentra*; NIZW, Utrecht.

Khaznadar C (1999) 'J'aime le kh guttural' in *Internationale de l'imaginaire N°10. Nous et les autres. Les cultures contre le racisme*, pp. 11-17; Babel, Maisons des cultures du monde, Arles.

Khoshkhesal V (1996) *Home away from home. Cultural sensitivity in Family Day Care*; Lady Gowrie Child Centre, Sydney.

Khoshkhesal V (1998) *Realising the potential. Cultural and linguistic diversity in Family Day Care*; Lady Gowrie Child Centre, Sydney.

250

Kind en Gezin (Ed.) (1998) *Visietekst in verband met de pedagogische kwaliteit in het opvanggezin*; Kind en Gezin, Brussels.

King EW, Chipman M and Cruz-Janzen M (1994) *Educating young children in a diverse society*; Allyn and Bacon, Needham Heights.

Kohnstamm R (1991) *Kleine ontwikkelingspsychologie. Deel 1. Het jonge kind*; Bohn Stafleu Van Loghum, Houten.

Kompier R (1995) *Drie maal woordwaarde. Een methodiek voor taalstimulering in kindercentra*; SWP, Utrecht.

Laevers F and Sanden P van (1996) *Kleurig klashouden. Ervaringsgericht werken met kansenbelemmerden en migranten in het kleuteronderwijs*; Centrum voor Ervaringsgericht Onderwijs, Leuven.

Laevers F, Leijnen A, and Veulemans K, (1993) 'De kwaliteit van de opvang in kinderdagverblijven' in Baekelmans *et al* (Eds.) *Werken aan een betere kinderopvang. Rapport over dertien jaar onderzoek en vorming met de steun van de Bernard van Leer Foundation en Kind en Gezin*; VBJK, Ghent.

Lamb ME (Ed) (1997) *The role of the father in Child Development*; John Wiley and Sons, New York.

Lambert WE (1987) 'The effects of bilingual and bicultural experiences on children's attitudes and social perspectives' in Homel P, Palij M, and Aaronson D (Eds) *Childhood Bilingualism: Aspects of Linguistic, cognitive and social development*; Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, London.

Lanjri N (1998) *Zonder omwegen. De stem van een nieuwe generatie*; Icarus, Antwerp.

Laplantine F (1999) *Je, nous et les autres. Etre humain au-delà des appartenances*; Le Pommier, Paris.

Lejeune M and Blanc M-C (1998) *A model of intercultural communication with parents, adopted by ACEPP, France*, paper presented at the Training of the Trainers Course on Education without Prejudice; DECET-VBJK, Ghent.

Lesthaeghe R (Ed.) (1997) *Diversiteit in sociale verandering. Turkse en Marokkaanse vrouwen in België*; VUBPress, Brussels.

Lewis C (1997) 'Fathers and preschoolers' in Lamb ME (Ed.) *The role of the father in child development*; John Wiley and Sons, New York.

Liaudet J-C (1998) *Dolto expliquée aux parents*; l'Archipel, Montreal.

Maalouf A (1998) *Les identitées meurtrières*; Bernard Grasset, Paris.

MacNaughton G and Williams G (1998) *Techniques for teaching young children. Choices in theory and practice*; Longman, South Melbourne.

Malbert D (1998) 'L'Europe et la diversité. Entretien avec Antonio Perotti' in *Revue internationale d'éducation*, no. 17, March 1998, pp. 33-44; Centre International d'Etudes Pédagogiques, Sèvres.

Mandela N (1995) *De lange weg naar de vrijheid*; Contact, Amsterdam.

Maxime JE (date unknown) *The therapeutic importance of racial identity in working with black children who hate*; Working Group Against Racism in Children's Resources, London.

Meertens R (1997) 'Verminderen van vooroordeel en discriminatie. Een overzicht van de sociaal-psychologische literatuur' in H de Witte (Ed.) *Bestrijding van racisme en rechts-extremisme*; Acco, Leuven.

Mekideche T (1998) 'Modèles éducatifs, institutionnels et familiaux et pratiques éducatives dans les classes prescolaires. Etude comparative' in *Actes du colloque international sur l'éducation préscolaire. Problématiques et perspectives. Novembre 1997*; ATFALE/Bernard van Leer Foundation/Service Culturel de l'Ambassade de France au Maroc, Rabat.

Milne AA (1973) *Winnie de Poeh*; Van Goor, Amsterdam.

Mistry K (1994) 'Working with Asian Communities' in Vandenbroeck M (Ed.) *Empowering the parents. ENSAC 5th international congress*; VBJK-Kind en Gezin, Ghent.

252

Mony M (1993) *La responsabilité des parents et des professionels dans les structures d'accueil de jeunes enfants à gestion parentale et associative: production de savoirs nouveaux par la mobilisation des compétences de tous les acteurs*; lezing gehouden op het Colloque ADRETS Politiques sociales et qualités des modes d'accueil de la petite enfance, Lyon, 1993; ACEPP, Paris.

Mortier G (1996) 'In search of cultural identity' in *Austria Kultur*, vol. 6, no. 2/96; Austrian Culture Institute and Communication House Int., New York; www.austriaculture.net.

Musatti T (1983) 'Echanges dans une situation de jeux de "faire semblant"' in Stambak M (Ed.) *Les bébés entre eux. Découvrir, jouer, inventer ensemble*; Presses Universitaires de France, Paris.

Nasio JD and Dolto F (1997) *L'enfant du miroir*; Editions Rivages, Paris.

Nieuwenborgh M van (1994) 'Tibetreizigster inspireerde Hergé' in *De Standaard*, 8 June 1994.

Nigris E (1996a) 'Diversità: risorsa e stimolo' in *Bambini*, February 1996, p. 24.

Nigris E (1996b) *Ecologia della differenza*; Edizioni Junior, Bergamo.

Nijsten C (1998) *Opvoeding in Turkse gezinnen in Nederland*; Van Gorcum, Assen.

Ogunsola A (date unknown) *Childcare and Equal Opportunity*; Working Group Against Racism in Children's Resources, London.

Olivier S (1998) 'De culturele bemiddeling' in Vandenbroeck M (Ed.) *Respect for diversity in early childhood care and education. The CD Rom*; MEQ-VBJK, Ghent.

Onderwaater A (1986) *De onverbrekelijke band tussen ouders en kinderen. Over de denkbeelden van Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy en Helm Stierlin*; Swets and Zeitlinger, Amsterdam.

Ondongh-Essalt E (1998) Editorial in *Revue Internationale d'Etudes Transculturelles et d'ethnopsychanalyse Cliniqu*; Artcom, Paris.

Orwell G (1948)(1978) *1984*; Arbeiderspers, Amsterdam.

Özsoy A and Hübner M (1999) *Kind im Mittelpunt*; Verein zur Förderung ausländischer und deutscher Kinder, Berlin.

Page H and Segaert A (1997) 'Zonen en dochters: veranderingen inzake kinderwens' in Lesthaeghe R (Ed.) *Diversiteit in sociale verandering. Turkse en Marokkaanse vrouwen in België*. VUBPress, Brussels.

Patterson CJ and Chan RW (1997) 'Gay Fathers' in Lamb ME (Ed.) *The role of the father in child development*; John Wiley and Sons, New York.

Peeters J (1998) 'Ervaringen van het MEQ-project' in Somers A (Ed.) *Respect voor diversiteit in de kinderopvang*; VBJK, Ghent.

Peeters J (date unknown) *Respect voor diversiteit in de kinderopvang. Ervaringen met intercultureel werken in de Vlaamse kinderopvang*. Video; VBJK, Ghent.

Peeters J and Vandenbroeck M (1993) 'White childcare – multi-cultural kindergarten' in *NOW The Letter*, no. 2, pp. 27-29; VBJK, Ghent.

Peeters J and Vandenbroeck M (1998a) *How good it is to be you! An Anti-Bias Journey*, video; VBJK-DECET, Ghent.

Peeters J and Vandenbroeck M (1998b) 'Vaderen, of de teloorgang van de autoriteit' in *CGSO, Jaarboek 99, Seksualiteit, relaties, geboorteregeling*; CGSO, Ghent.

Pels T (1993) 'Marokkaanse gezinscultuur en kinderopvang' in F de Graaff F and A van Keulen *Intercultureel Opvoeden*, pp. 19-26; SWP, Utrecht.

Pels T (1998) *Opvoeden in Marokkaanse gezinnen in Nederland*; Van Gorcum, Assen.

Perregaux C (1998) 'Se familiariser aux langues en apprenant la richesse des autres' in *Le Furet, Revue de la Petite Enfance et de l'intégration*, no. 27, pp. 34-36; Le Furet, Strasbourg.

Phoenix A (1992) 'Comments on Active and Autonomous Children: Social Policy which fosters or hinders their development' in ENSAC (Ed.) *The children's experience. Third European Conference on School-Age Childcare*; Thomas Coram Research Unit, London.

Pinto D (1994) *Interculturele communicatie*; Bohn Stafleu Van Loghum, Houten-Zaventem.

Pinxten R and Verstraete G (Eds.) (1998) *Cultuur en macht. Over identiteit en conflict in een multiculturele wereld*; Houtekiet, Antwerpen-Baarn.

Pot L (1994) *Daar doen ze het zó! Een reisverslag van inspirerende voorzieningen voor jonge kinderen*; NIZW, Utrecht.

Raes K (1997) *Het moeilijke ontmoeten. Verhalen over alledaagse zedelijkheid*; VUBPress, Brussels.

Ramstein S (1989) *Un pédiatre raconte. Histoires de bien grandir*; Hatier, Paris.

Raundalen M (1991) *Care and courage*; Rädda Barnen's publications series 1991:3, Rädda Barnen, Stockholm.

Raundalen M (1999) *The development of racial attitudes in childhood*; paper presented at the Save the Children Sweden Seminar, Sigtuna.

Renard L and Guilbert D (1998) 'Entretien avec Colette Chiland. La construction de l'identité sexuée' in *Enfance and Psy*, no. 3, pp. 9-25; Erès, Ramonville.

Rey M (1997) *L'europe en bref. Identités culturelles et interculturalité en Europe*; Centre Européen de la Culture/Actes Sud, Genève.

Roselaar T Lindijer H, and Evegroen R (1993) *Taalontwikkeling en meertaligheid in kindercentra*; Samsom-HD Tjeenk Willink, Alphen aan den Rijn.

Run J-L le and Renard L (1997) 'Questions d'origines' in *Enfance et Psy*. no 1, pp. 8-10; Erès, Ramonville.

Schaerlaekens A (1994) 'Eén, twee, meer talen voor kinderen?' in *Het kind* 94/3, pp. 7-18; Kind en Gezin, Brussels.

Scheepers P, Billiet J, and H de Witte (1995) 'Het electoraat van het Vlaams Blok. De kiezers en hun opvattingen' in *Sociologische Gids* 95/3, pp. 232-252; Boom.

Serres M *et al* (1994) *Naar Tibet met Kuifje*; Fondation Hergé, Brussels.

Singer E (1996) 'Flexibilisering en pedagogische kwaliteit' in Somers A (Ed.) *Flexibiliteit. Grenzen aan de kinderopvang*; VBJK, Ghent.

Smith T (1980) *Parents and preschool*; Grant McIntyre, London.

Soenen R (1998) 'Creatieve en dynamische processen in het alledaagse leven. Een inspiratiebron voor intercultureel onderwijs' in Pinxten R and Verstraete G (Eds.) *Cultuur en macht. Over identiteit en conflict in een multiculturele wereld*; Houtekiet, Antwerpen-Baarn.

Somers A (1998b) 'Drie lastige vragen en moeilijke antwoorden' in *Kido: Tijdschrift voor de kinderopvang* 12/4; VBJK, Ghent.

Somers A (Ed.) (1996) *Kinderopvang in groep. Werkmap voor kinderdagverblijven*; VBJK, Ghent.

Somers A (Ed.) (1998a) *Respect voor diversiteit in de kinderopvang*; VBJK, Ghent.

Stonehouse A (1991) *Opening the doors. Child care in a multicultural society*; Australian Early Childhood Association, Watson.

Storms B (1995) *Het matteüs-effect in de kinderopvang*; Centrum voor Sociaal Beleid – Universiteit Antwerpen, Antwerp.

Strat M le (1997) 'Lieux d'accueil et espace transitionnel' in *Le Furet, Revue de la Petite Enfance et de l'intégration* no. 23, pp. 24-25; Le Furet, Strasbourg.

Stufkens M (1993) 'Van intercultureel speelgoed naar wereldspeelgoed' in F de Graaf and A van Keulen *Intercultureel Opvoeden*, pp. 85-92; SWP, Utrecht.

Swyngedouw M, Phalet K and Deschouwer K (1999) *Minderheden in Brussel. Sociopolitieke houdingen en gedragingen*; VUBPress, Brussel.

Taleb M (1996) 'Famille et parenté: Quelques repères anthropologiques' in *Le Furet, Revue de la Petite Enfance et de l'intégration*, no. 19, pp. 12-15; Le Furet, Strasbourg.

Taylor DM (1987) 'Social psychological barriers to effective childhood bilingualism' in Homel P, Palij M and Aaronson D (Eds) *Childhood Bilingualism: Aspects of Linguistic, cognitive and social development*; Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, London.

Tijus CA, Santolini A and Danis A (1994) *La participation parentale en crèche et le développement intellectuel de l'enfant*; CNRS-ACEPP, Paris.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (1978) *Declaration on race and racial prejudice*; adopted at the General Conference, Paris, 27 November 1978.

Vandekerckhove A (1999) 'De 21ste eeuw: de eeuw van de rechten van het kind?' in Somers A *Kind in de eenentwintigste eeuw*; VBJK, Ghent.

Vandenberghe L (1999) 'Enkele belangrijke tendensen in de omgeving van kinderen met implicaties voor een kindvriendelijk beleid' in Somers A *Kind in de eenentwintigste eeuw*; VBJK, Ghent.

Vandenbroeck M (1996) 'Gehechtheid' in Peeters J *Kind aan huis. Een handboek voor medewerkers kinderopvang*; VBJK, Ghent.

Vandenbroeck M (1997) 'Vechten tegen vooroordelen' in *Kido: Tijdschrift voor de kinderopvang* 11/4, pp. 3-5, VBJK, Ghent.

Vandenbroeck M (1998b) 'Ondertussen in de Sleepstraat' in *Kido: Tijdschrift voor de kinderopvang*; 12/extra year, September, pp. 20-21; VBJK, Ghent.

Vandenbroeck M (1999) 'Een heerlijke hangmat' in *Kido. Tijdschrift voor de kinderopvang*. 13/1 year, no. 1, pp. 3-4, VBJK, Ghent.

Vandenbroeck M (Ed.) (1998) *Respect for diversity in early childhood care and education*. The CD Rom; MEQ-VBJK, Ghent.

257

Vandersteen W (1950) *Suske en Wiske: De witte uil*; Standaard Uitgeverij, Antwerpen.

Vedder P, Bouwer E and Pels T (1996) *Multicultural Child Care*; Multilingual Matters Ltd, Clevedon.

Velthuijs M (1993) *Kikker en de vreemdeling*; Leopold, Amsterdam.

Ventimiglia C (1994) 'Cher papa ... apprenons à nous raconter' in Vandenbroeck M (Ed.) *Empowering the parents. SWP 5th international congress*; VBJK-Kind en Gezin, Ghent.

Verbunt G (1994) *Les obstacles culturels aux apprentissages*; CNDPT, Paris.

Verbunt G (1996) 'Former des intervenants de la petite enfance' in *Le Furet, Revue de la Petite Enfance et de l'intégration* no. 21, pp. 18-20; Le Furet, Strasbourg.

Verbunt G (1998) *Les jeunes et l'autorité. Aspects culturels*; CNDPT, Paris.

Verbunt G (1999) 'Culturele vooruitzichten voor de vorming van de identiteit en opvoeding' in Somers A (Ed.) *Kind in de eenentwintigste eeuw*; VBJK, Ghent.

Verhaeghe P (1999) *Liefde in tijden van eenzaamheid. Drie verhandelingen over drift en verlangen*; Acco, Leuven.

Verhegge K (1994) *De beoordelingsschaal voor het pedagogisch functioneren in kinderdagverblijven*; Kind en Gezin, Brussels.

Verhofstadt-Denève L, Geert P van and Vyt A (1995) *Handboek ontwikkelingspsychologie. Grondslagen en theorieën*; Bohn Stafleu Van Loghum, Houten-Diegem.

Vinsonneau G (1996) *L'identité des jeunes en société inégalitaire. Le cas des Maghrébins en France. Perspectives cognitives et expérimentales*; L'Harmatan, Paris.

Vriendt A de, Marche J de la, and Pyck K (Ed) (1985) *Groepsopvoeders en ouders. Tegenstanders of medestanders?*; Acco, Leuven.

258

Walschap G (1958) *Houtekiet*; NBC, Den Haag/Antwerpen.

Waning A van (Ed.) (1999) *Multiculturele samenleving en psychoanalyse*; Van Gorcum, Assen.

Wildman N (1998) *Experiences with bilingual support staff in the UK*, paper presented at the Training of the Trainers Course on education without prejudice; DECET-VBJK, Ghent.

Willems W and Cottaar A (1991) 'Intercultureel werken in de kinderopvang' in Keulen A van, Graaff F de and Hol A (Eds.) *Intercultureel management in kindercentra*; NIZW, Utrecht.

WKN (1987) *Taal en taal is meer dan twee. Een koppeling van theorie aan praktijk in kindercentra*; Oosterbeek.

259

Michel Vandenbroeck (1959) is an educator and has been affiliated with the Vormingscentrum voor de Begeleiding van het Jonge Kind (VBJK – Training and Resource Centre for Childcare) at the University of Ghent since 1986. He has participated in an extensive study on diversity in childcare centres and is the co-founder of the European network DECET (Diversity in Early Childhood Education and Training).

If you would like any further information about any of the issues addressed in this publication, please contact:

Mr Michel Vandenbroeck
VBJK
University of Ghent
Bellevue 22
9050 Ghent
Belgium
michel.vandenbroeck@rug.ac.be

The view of the Yeti

The view of the Yeti is about shifting perspectives and about accepting each other as human beings in all our diversity. The Yeti – that mythical creature of the Himalayas – is not understood, its existence is doubted and it is forever hunted. In this book, the Yeti symbolises the prejudices and assumptions that people prematurely make about each other, instead of seeing through outward appearances and stereotypes.

The discussion at the centre of this book is about bringing up children from birth to not only accept diversity, but to cherish it and to thrive in an increasingly diverse world. The ideas presented in this book are underpinned by many examples taken from practice. Although *The view of the Yeti* takes its insights from Dutch, French and English language literature, and its practical examples are based on the European issues and context, this book in fact is of great interest for all those working with young children who believe that the first step towards encouraging children to live side by side with others is to help them build up a positive image of themselves.

The author, Michel Vandenbroeck of the Vormingscentrum voor de Begeleiding van het Jonge Kind (the Training and Resource Centre for Childcare) in Ghent, Belgium, works in the training of childcare workers – the primary audience for this book. But *The view of the Yeti* is also relevant to all those who deal with young children on a regular basis, be they childcare workers, social workers, teachers, psychologists and, of course, parents.

ISBN 90-6195-059-7

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

261